

# **The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1905-1921**

Origins of the Modern American  
Student Movement

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## The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1905–1921: Origins of the Modern American Student Movement

Max Horn

The Intercollegiate Socialist Society—prototype of the modern American student movement and the ancestor of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—was the first nationally organized student group that had a distinct political and ideological orientation. Its social and economic concerns, among them the labor and women's suffrage movements, encompassed most of the issues agitating a rapidly changing society during the first two decades of this century. The ISS started a tradition of student political awareness and protest that has persisted to our day. For more than 15 years, it provided a forum for a group of gifted young men and women who, then and later, exercised influence far out of proportion to their numbers.

This first full-scale study of the ISS follows the society from its birth in 1905 to its decline during World War I and the postwar period. Relying largely on original sources, Horn examines the structure, ideology, program, and tactics of the ISS and assesses its impact on students, faculty, and college administrators.

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# **The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1905–1921: Origins of the Modern American Student Movement**

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## For Dorothy

We don't desire merely to make converts. ... If collegians cannot fight for us, we want them to fight against us.... But what we don't want is that which obtains today and has obtained in the past of the university, a mere deadness and unconcern and ignorance so far as socialism is concerned. Fight for us or fight against us! Raise your voices one way or the other; be alive!

—*Jack London*  
President of ISS, 1906

Meet [socialism] as a dialectical process in Karl Marx, and it seems terrible and remote. Meet it in the immediate issues of life, and you will find the true sentiment of the nation behind it.

—*Walter Lippmann*  
President of Harvard Socialist Club, 1910

Not personal salvation, but social; not our own characters, but the character of society, is our interest and concern. We feel social injustice as our fathers felt personal sin. Settlement work and socialist propaganda ... are now the commonplaces of the undergraduate.

—*Randolph S. Bourne*  
Member of Columbia Socialist Club, 1911

Surplus value, the iron law of wages, the class struggle, the social revolution, economic determinism, have no meaning one way or the other, for or against. It is simply a question of misdirected production and misappropriated profits.

—*Hiram K. Moderwell*  
President of Harvard Socialist Club, 1912

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## Preface

In the fall of 1965, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) parted company with the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), its parent organization. This marked the end of a relationship that, under various names, had endured for more than forty years. For SDS, the dominant student movement of the sixties, did not arise in a vacuum; its distant ancestor was an earlier student organization, the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS), which was founded in 1905 by a group of middle-class and upper-class socialists and assorted reformers. In 1921 the ISS reorganized and became the League for Industrial Democracy; the student arm of that organization was known for many years as the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID). Like the ISS before it, SLID was also dependent upon adult sponsorship for financial and administrative support, and SLID remained dependent upon that support after its executive committee voted in 1959 to change its name to SDS. Six years later SDS thought it was ready to stand on its own feet, split with the league, and embarked upon its brief but stormy career as an independent student movement.

This study of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society attempts to trace the origin and growth of the society from its birth in 1905 to its Recline during World War I and its ultimate transformation in 1921; to examine its structure, ideology, program, and tactics; and to assess its impact on students, faculty, and college administrators. The ISS—the prototype of the modern American student movement—was the first nationally organized student group that had a distinct political and ideological orientation. Unlike most other contemporary student movements, the ISS was not a single-issue organization. Quite the contrary, its social

concerns encompassed most of the issues agitating a rapidly changing society during the first two decades of this century.

The ISS arose and reached maturity in the first years of the Progressive era, a period of soaring optimism and often extravagant faith in the power of men to shape and control social institutions. It was a period marked by the growth of various radical and reform movements, and in this fertile soil the Socialist Party of America grew and prospered. Far more influential than the doctrinaire Socialist Labor Party dominated by Daniel De Leon, the Socialist party was heir to the radical traditions of the preceding quarter century and more. In its ranks were orthodox Marxists as well as those having reformist or revisionist tendencies; Christian socialists and Wobblies; former members of Bellamyite Nationalist clubs; those who at one time had been stirred by Laurence Gronlund's vision of the cooperative commonwealth; sometime believers in Henry George's single-tax theory; and former Populists and other exponents of agrarian discontent. In short, the Socialist party was a broad coalition party, resembling in this respect the old political parties. Its heterogeneity made for a lively diversity of views, and though the party had its share of factional fights, it neither desired nor attempted to enforce doctrinal purity. While the ISS considered itself part and parcel of the socialist movement, it took no part in the Socialist party's internal affairs. Party matters were, in fact, rarely discussed in the ISS executive committee or at the society's conventions and conferences. In other words, the society's relations with the Socialist party—and with the American labor movement—were rather complex and at times ambiguous. And since a grasp of these relations is essential to an understanding of the spirit of the ISS, they are woven into the texture of the narrative and examined at various points throughout this book.

Of course, the ISS was not the only campus group that sought to arouse the interest of college students and claim their allegiance. Almost any large institution of higher learning, and many smaller ones, harbored a variety of organized student groups. There were, for example, the student political clubs which campaigned for the candidates of the old political parties. But most of these clubs were quadrennial mushroom growths; they would come to life shortly before

Presidential elections, only to disappear as soon as the election was over. The Cosmopolitan clubs, fairly widespread at the time, were interested primarily in promoting international understanding and cooperation among nations. Since these clubs usually had a large number of foreign students among their members, they paid little attention to domestic issues. Another organization, the Intercollegiate Civic League (ICL), was, like the ISS, a national organization, but its affiliates were basically good government clubs. As its name implied and its constitution specified, the main purpose of the ICL was to instill in college students a sense of civic duty. As a rule, the ICL was not oriented toward any particular political party, but its tone and activities were generally progressivist.

The ISS had little competition from campus literary societies, for these societies had long since lost both their vigor and former influence. The old literary societies, rooted as they were in the Enlightenment, had championed faith in reason and in the power of intellect. At the height of their influence before the Civil War, the literary societies had helped to relieve the tedium of the classroom by providing access to subjects generally neglected in the regular college curriculum. By the turn of the century, however, most of the literary societies had become mere debating clubs. As to the last, college debating as practiced at the time was not likely to produce students having either spontaneity or firm convictions. More than one writer of the period decried the artificial character of these debates and the practice of assigning positions to debaters at variance with their true feelings. In contrast, the ISS encouraged its chapters to arrange rigorous debates between proponents of socialism and well-known opponents in order to bring out the relative merits of each position.

The ISS appeared at a time when serious study was frowned upon, if not actively discouraged by college students everywhere. Even at Harvard, the “gentleman’s C” was the mark of distinction for any student who did not wish to incur the displeasure of his peers. In this climate of rampant anti-intellectualism the ISS insisted that college men and women had an obligation to undertake the systematic study of the socialist philosophy, and to try to understand the nature of the worldwide socialist movement as well as other movements of social

reform. The insistence of the society on the right of students to study socialism was coupled with firm support of the right of teachers to present unorthodox economic or social theories. Indeed, the ISS urged its members to defend the academic freedom of both students and teachers and to fight for their right to bring to the campus such speakers as they might choose, regardless of their political or social views. In the final analysis, what distinguished the ISS from other contemporary student groups was its vision of a radically transformed society in which social justice would be done. In the cooperative commonwealth, the ISS believed, solutions would be found for the troublesome social problems that had surfaced in the wake of rapid industrialization and urbanization. In appealing to the idealism of college students, in arousing their social conscience, the ISS attracted some of the best minds on campus. Many of these men and women made significant contributions to American society.

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to Professor Frederick D. Kershner, Jr., of Teachers College, Columbia University, and to Professor Walter P. Metzger of Columbia University for their constructive criticism and sympathetic concern. I am also indebted for helpful suggestions to Professor Walter E. Sindlinger and Professor Douglas Sloan, both of Teachers College, and to Professor Robert T. Handy of Union Theological Seminary. I extend my special thanks to two of my colleagues at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York: Professor Morton Rosenstock, who read the study as it progressed and offered perceptive criticism and advice; and Professor Lillian Gottesman, who made helpful editorial suggestions. While all of these individuals contributed in various ways, they should, of course, not be held responsible for any errors or shortcomings in the study.

*M.H.*

# 1

## Birth of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society.

On the afternoon of September 12, 1905, more than fifty men and women met at Peck's Restaurant in downtown New York to found a new student organization. They had been summoned by Upton Sinclair, a moderately successful young writer, who was assisted by his friend George H. Strobell, a well-to-do manufacturer of jewelry. Sinclair, whose muck-raking novel *The Jungle* was then appearing serially in the socialist *Appeal to Reason* prior to publication, had joined the Socialist party in 1901; Strobell, a Christian socialist, had for years been devoting time and treasure to the propagation of the Social Gospel.

In Sinclair's view, muckraking was all to the good. If such popular magazines as *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, *Collier's*, *The Arena* exposed the machinations of "the interests," a large part of the reading public would become conscious of existing social evils. Of far greater significance to Sinclair, however, were the rise and rapid growth of the Socialist party, which claimed to have a remedy for the social evils afflicting the country. Unlike its forerunners, the Socialist party, reorganized and unified in 1901, was largely an indigenous party. At the unity convention in Indianapolis, fully 80 percent of the delegates were native-born, a proportion not far below the national ratio of 86 percent. There was thus considerable merit in the claim of a party official that socialism had ceased to be "an exotic plant in this country."<sup>1</sup> By 1904 the party had 21,000 dues-paying members, far more than it had ever had during the faction-ridden years of Daniel De Leon's dominance.

Eugene Debs, the party's presidential candidate in 1904, had polled over 400,000 votes, more than four times his vote in 1900. Assessing this record of growth shortly after the election of 1904, the writer Jack London, Sinclair's fellow socialist, had characterized the movement "as an ethical movement as well as an economic and political movement, one may say, a religious movement as well."<sup>2</sup>

By 1905, would-be reformers cited socialist successes in order to convince the defenders of the status quo that it would be unwise to delay urgently needed social reforms. Theodore R. Roosevelt, for example, alarmed at the rapid progress of the Socialist party, thought its growth was "far more ominous than any populist or similar movement in time past." This threat, the patrician in the White House felt, could be blocked only by speedy reform of the existing order. Similarly, when Louis D. Brandeis was preparing to attack the great insurance companies for abuses in the sale of industrial life insurance, he raised the specter of government supervision of the industry. In an address before the Commercial Club of Boston, he warned that "we shall inevitably be swept farther toward socialism unless we curb the excesses of our financial magnates."<sup>3</sup> In contrast, a few years earlier Sinclair had experienced socialism as a liberating force. While struggling for professional recognition and attempting to sustain himself and his young family, Sinclair had discovered the socialist movement; by identifying with it, he had found that he could merge his own struggle for existence with that of suffering humanity. It was, he recalled later, "as if the heavens opened before me and I walked in. I didn't know that there had been anybody who had felt the way I did." His education, it dawned on him, had been incomplete, for in nine years of college and university education, none of his teachers had ever mentioned that the modern socialist movement existed. "Since the professors refused to teach the students about modern life," he concluded, "it was up to the students to teach themselves...."<sup>4</sup>

College students, Sinclair decided, deserved an opportunity to learn the facts about the surge of the socialist movement and its impact on modern life. In December 1904 he drafted a call for the formation of an association, which he named the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS),

and circulated its text among a number of prominent men and women whom he thought to be sympathetic to socialism. “In the opinion of the undersigned,” the call read,

the recent remarkable increase in the Socialist vote in America should serve as an indication to the educated men and women in the country that Socialism is a thing concerning which it is no longer wise to be indifferent.

The undersigned, regarding its aims and fundamental principles with sympathy, and believing that in them will ultimately be found the remedy for many far-reaching economic evils, propose organizing an association, to be known as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, for the purpose of promoting an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women, graduate and undergraduate, through the formation of study clubs in the colleges and universities, and the encouraging of all legitimate endeavors to awaken an interest in Socialism among the educated men and women of the country.<sup>5</sup>

In a brief letter accompanying the document, Sinclair voiced his belief that the call, if signed by prominent persons, would be widely published in newspapers generally read by college students. “Would you be willing to sign it,” he asked, “and lend your influence to such a movement?”<sup>6</sup>

Sinclair’s letter drew a mixed response. Clarence Darrow, famed criminal lawyer and champion of labor, agreed to lend his name. If Sinclair thought Darrow might be of help in getting the organization started, “you are welcome to use me, for I certainly am in sympathy with it.” Oscar Lovell Triggs, author, journalist, and formerly an instructor of English literature at the University of Chicago, thought that the study of contemporary movements “might stir things up a bit.” Benjamin O. Flower, editor of *The Arena*, also agreed to sign. He cautioned, however, that the introduction of socialism in the United States must be preceded by the passage of “Direct Legislation” to insure that socialism would come under a democratic form of government rather than a bureaucratic despotism. And Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the veteran abolitionist who was then in his eighty-second year, wrote that although he had never claimed to be a socialist, he “heartily believes in the study of socialism.”<sup>7</sup>

A number of other respondents declined Sinclair’s invitation. William Lloyd Garrison, secretary of the American Free Trade League and son

of the militant abolitionist, wrote Sinclair that as “an avowed disbeliever in Socialism and a pronounced Individualist” he was unable to sign the call. Indeed, he agreed with Herbert Spencer that socialism was “the coming slavery”; it was his own view that the world was in trouble because of “too much government and too little liberty.” While recognizing the idealism of many socialists and respecting their objectives, he explained that Henry George’s single-tax doctrine was enough for him and that he devoted to it as much time as he could spare. Author Julian Hawthorne, son of novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, declined to sign the call on the ground that college students were too immature to be introduced to socialism. “College boys,” he asserted, “are not competent (as a rule) to form opinions on Socialism, or on any other subject... likely to be permanent or particularly effective.”<sup>8</sup>

Among those contacted by Sinclair were a number of prestigious university professors. Possibly fearing unfavorable repercussions, their responses ranged from guarded expressions of sympathy to cautious refusal. But even those professing sympathy declined to be identified with Sinclair’s project. Thorstein Veblen was one of those who begged off politely. The organization of a socialist society had been tried before at the University of Chicago, he wrote Sinclair. It had failed to get off the ground and any new attempt, he predicted pessimistically, would come to nothing because college students could not easily be won over to socialism. And since he was not a very good organizer, he added apologetically, his help would not be worth much. From the University of Wisconsin came word that John R. Commons declined to be listed as one of the signers. Although he was interested in having college students study socialism, Commons wrote, he did not wish to associate himself with the socialist movement. His colleague at Wisconsin, Richard T. Ely, Director of the university’s School of Economics and Political Science and author of studies of socialism and social reform, also refused the use of his name. While he encouraged fair treatment and open discussion of the socialist movement, he had never been able to endorse the socialist philosophy. And George Rice Carpenter, professor of rhetoric at Columbia University, while claiming to be in sympathy with Sinclair’s views, did not think that “the time is



propitious” for starting clubs for the study of socialism among college students.<sup>9</sup>

Sinclair was not discouraged. After sifting the favorable replies, he selected eight men and one woman who would sign the call along with him. In addition to Darrow, Flower, Higginson, and Triggs, whose affirmative replies have already been noted, they were Leonard D. Abbott, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jack London, James G. Phelps Stokes, and William English Walling. Abbott was the influential editor of *Current Literature*. He had been identified with the socialist movement since 1895 and, in 1901, had been one of the founders of the unified Socialist party. Indeed, it was Abbott who had introduced Sinclair to socialist ideas and the literature on the subject. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, whose ancestors included Lyman Beecher and Roger Williams, was an author, lecturer, and ardent feminist. As early as 1898, in *Women and Economics*, she had argued persuasively for women’s financial independence, thus going considerably beyond the standard goal of the suffrage movement. In London she had met George Bernard Shaw and Beatrice and Sidney Webb and had been greatly influenced by the ideas of these Fabians. Jack London was a popular writer who had established a solid reputation as an author of suspenseful adventure stories. His socialism was a heady mixture, derived in equal parts from the writings of various utopian socialists and American socialists and from the *Communist Manifesto*, read avidly while on the road. He had been a socialist, he told an interviewer, “ever since I was brought face to face with the problem of getting a job, since I was 17.”<sup>10</sup> William English Walling, then twenty-eight years of age, was one of the youngest signers of the call. A man of some means, he was the son of a physician who had been United States Consul in Edinburgh and grandson of William H. English, the Democratic candidate for vice president in 1880. During the next dozen years he would be influential in the ISS as well as in the Socialist party; for the present he lent a prestigious name to Sinclair’s project.

The man whose name headed the list of signers of the call was James Graham Phelps Stokes, “millionaire socialist”<sup>11</sup> whose marriage in 1905 to Rose Pastor, an immigrant cigar worker, was to cause a sensation and

provide endless diversion for newspaper readers of all shades of opinion. Scion of a wealthy and socially prominent New York family, Stokes was a graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons. He practiced medicine only sporadically, but served instead as president of various family-controlled railroads and mining companies. In 1904 he had been a presidential elector on the Populist ticket; in 1905 he had served as vice chairman of the Municipal Ownership League and had been its candidate for president of the New York Board of Aldermen. Of the ten persons who signed the call, only Abbott, London, and Sinclair were then dues-paying members of the Socialist party. But all of them did share other characteristics that, taken together, would typify the future leadership of the ISS. All of the signers were native Americans with the exception of English-born Abbott, who had immigrated from England at the age of nineteen. All of them were college graduates or at least had attended college except for Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the sole woman among them. Finally, and perhaps most important, all of them were of impeccable middle-class or upper-class origin except for London whose proletarian background set him apart from the leading figures in the ISS.

## II

The call appeared in the spring of 1905 in socialist as well as in other papers. Stokes, not given to hyperbole, felt that the response to the appeal issued by him and his associates was "quite phenomenal."<sup>12</sup> Most of the respondents were adults: college graduates, socialists or sympathizers who expressed varying degrees of enthusiasm for the proposed organization. An alumnus of the University of Chicago who wrote from Cold Spring Harbor, New York, promised to join the ISS once it was organized; at the same time he requested that his name not be made public because of the "conditions of my employment." Regrettably, active work on behalf of the ISS would be impossible, he concluded, because that "would be dangerous" in his present position.

An elitist note was struck by another prospective member who wanted membership in the ISS limited to college students or graduates. There had been some criticism of the call, he wrote, because some of its signers were not college graduates. "We would do well to avoid that criticism." One of the more revealing letters came from Vida D. Scudder, professor of classics at Wellesley. As a long-time socialist, she wrote, she was greatly interested in the proposed society. But as one who had taught at Wellesley for many years, she was convinced that student interest in social and political matters generally was very low, and she therefore doubted that students would be interested in a socialist society. Moreover, the name of the proposed society would drive away precisely those students whom the society particularly wanted to attract. Nonetheless she wanted to be kept informed, for some organization to awaken students from their lethargy was badly needed.<sup>13</sup>

A number of undergraduates also responded to Sinclair's call; their views ranged from bleak pessimism to qualified enthusiasm. A student at Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas, for example, told of abortive attempts during the preceding two years to organize a socialist club at that institution. The year before, he wrote, the faculty "sat down" on the interested students and refused permission to use the college name on the ground that this might "hurt the school financially." Should the ISS succeed in organizing study clubs in several other colleges, he concluded wistfully, the argument of the Washburn faculty would then cease to be convincing. William M. Feigenbaum, an undergraduate at Columbia College who had been "stumping" for socialist candidates for the preceding three years, wrote: "I am terribly in earnest in my Socialism. Friends attribute this to my youth (I am 18) but if this be so, I want to have this enthusiasm taken advantage of before it dies away, if it ever does." A young man named Harry Wellington Laidler also expressed interest in the proposed society. "I am a student at Wesleyan University," he began, "formerly studying in the American Socialist College of Kansas. Having read in *The Worker* about the proposed movement of students among the colleges, and that you were the one to address, I write." He hoped that the ISS would flourish and signed his letter, "Yours for Socialism."<sup>14</sup> Laidler could scarcely have known that

this contact, his first with an organization yet unborn, would lead to a lifelong connection with the ISS and its successor.

The editor of *Harper's Weekly* greeted the publication of the call with a sharp attack upon one of its signers, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, known as "the grand old man of Harvard," for sponsoring an organization "which aims to imbue the minds of the rising generation with socialistic doctrines." While one could readily understand why such people as Professor Triggs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jack London would wish to associate themselves with certain persons having "pyrotechnical" inclinations, the latter seemed "queer company" for Colonel Higginson. Higginson remained unruffled. The purpose of the ISS, he informed the editor, was not to make converts to socialism but to produce informed students of a movement that was daily growing in importance. And in a simile that would be quoted with obvious delight in ISS publications for years thereafter, he likened those who criticized the impartial study of socialism to "those medieval grammarians who wrote of an adversary 'May God confound thee for thy theory of irregular verbs!'" Ralph M. Easley, chairman of the executive council of the National Civic Federation and a professional antisocialist, was willing to give Higginson the benefit of the doubt. Higginson, he wrote, might have signed the call out of ignorance about the "sinister origin and unpatriotic purpose" of the ISS.<sup>15</sup>

### III

Throughout the summer of 1905 people in many walks of life responded to the call. Since the large majority of the correspondents supported immediate organization of the ISS, Sinclair wrote to all the "college Socialists" of whom he knew and invited them to an organizational meeting. As noted earlier, this meeting took place in late summer of 1905 at Peck's Restaurant in downtown New York. Morris Hillquit, a prominent socialist who attended upon Sinclair's invitation, recalls in his autobiography that it was an "enthusiastic gathering"

which included many people not connected with the socialist movement. Harry Laidler, a junior at Wesleyan University, had come down from Middletown to be present at the birth of the ISS. In addition to Sinclair, he recognized Leonard D. Abbott, well-known editor; historian Mary Beard; Louis B. Boudin, socialist lawyer and Marxist theoretician; Crystal Eastman, woman suffragist; William J. Ghent, socialist author and publicist; Gaylord Wilshire, editor of *Wilshire's Magazine*; and Rufus W. Weeks, vice president and actuary of the New York Life Insurance Company, a Christian socialist and, with Ghent, one of the founders of the Collectivist Society.<sup>16</sup>

After Sinclair had called the meeting to order, Ghent was elected chairman. Sinclair briefly explained the purpose of the society and a motion was then passed to organize at once, with the chairman ruling that all those present were entitled to participate in the deliberations and vote. A provisional constitution proposed by Sinclair was adopted which stated that the society "shall be known as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society." Membership would be open (1) to college students or graduates "of a college or educational institution of similar rank," and to college teachers; (2) to students organized into college chapters, such chapters to have control of their own membership and funds by paying a portion of all dues collected to the national society; and (3) to any other person who might be elected a sustaining member by the executive committee. The officers of the society were to consist of a president, two vice presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer, who would be elected to a one-year term by vote of the entire membership. The executive committee, which would take office in April of each year, comprised the five officers and six additional members also to be elected by the membership. Any proposal initiated by at least twenty-five members would have to be presented to the executive committee for its consideration.<sup>17</sup>

The first slate of officers elected at that meeting included Jack London, president; Upton Sinclair, first vice president; J. G. Phelps Stokes, second vice president; M. R. Holbrook, secretary; and the Reverend Owen R. Lovejoy, treasurer.<sup>18</sup> Lovejoy had recently left the pulpit in order to become assistant secretary of the National Child Labor

Committee. In addition to the officers, the executive committee consisted of Morris Hillquit, George H. Strobell, Katherine M. Meserole, Robert Hunter, George Willis Cooke, and Harry Laidler. Cooke had been a Unitarian minister for more than twenty-five years; his published works included a biography of Emerson. Hunter, Stokes's brother-in-law, was a noted muck-raker who had recently joined the Socialist party. In 1902 he had served as chairman of the first New York Commission for the Abolition of Child Labor. In his book *Poverty*, a pioneering sociological study, Hunter painted a grim picture of America's ten million poor who were living below the subsistence level. Mrs. Meserole seemingly was chosen a member of the committee because of her ample financial resources and her willingness to open her home to meetings of the society. Laidler, the only member of the executive committee then attending college, owed his election to that body to another undergraduate, William M. Feigenbaum. As Feigenbaum told it later, he nominated Laidler because he felt that an organization of college students should have at least one undergraduate on its governing board. Since London did not attend the meeting at Peck's Restaurant, his consent to serve as president of the ISS had to be obtained. From his home in Glen Ellen, California, he wired tersely, "All right I accept the office."<sup>19</sup>

## IV

Sinclair, conscious of the publicity value of Jack London's growing reputation as a writer, arranged a number of public lectures for the newly elected president of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. In the first of these lectures, London addressed an overflow audience in the Harvard Union. That morning the college daily had urged every student interested in public affairs to attend London's lecture, for it would provide an opportunity to learn what socialists really stood for from a man who knew the subject well. Regardless of one's personal views, the writer declared, every college man owed it to himself to find out about a



movement which commanded greater attention every day.<sup>20</sup> London came on stage dressed in his usual lecture outfit, a soft white shirt, flowing black tie, and black, sack-coated suit. The audience applauded politely. London began:

I received a letter the other day. It was from a man in Arizona. It began “Dear Comrade.” It ended, “Yours for the Revolution.” I replied to the letter, and my letter began, “Dear Comrade.” It ended, “Yours for the Revolution.”

In the United States, he continued, there are nearly one million men and women, and throughout the world “an army of seven million men,” all of whom are fighting “for the complete overthrow of existing society.” This coming revolution dwarfs all others, including the American Revolution or the French Revolution. But he also described this revolution as a romantic adventure—“romance so colossal that it seems to be beyond the ken of ordinary mortals.” It would be a peaceful revolution, he maintained, a revolution at the ballot box in those countries where the people have the vote. But if, as in Russia, the law of the country does not allow a peaceful struggle, the people will be forced to take up arms. London indicted the capitalist class for mismanaging society. In the United States, he asserted, ten million people are starving; children as young as five years are working twelve hours a day in textile mills to earn ten cents. The existence of these conditions in a land of plenty and the “criminal mismanagement” of our industrial life, he concluded, will result in “the uprising of the working class, the Revolution.” At the end London, who had talked for over two hours, received a standing ovation. A group of students stayed up with him all night to discuss socialism.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to London’s Harvard lecture, most of those who came to hear him at the Grand Central Palace in New York could hardly be called collegiate. Although there were a few students in the audience, the great majority of his listeners came from New York’s lower east side, “with Jewish boy and girl ushers wearing red badges.”<sup>22</sup> About four thousand people packed the Palace. The *New York Times* reported

next morning that women in the audience outnumbered the men about two to one and that many of them wore some red; some had red dresses, others red ribbons or red hats. Vendors sold little red flags, touting them as “genuine, blood-red Jack London souvenirs of a great and momentous occasion.” Since London was late, they quickly sold out their entire supply.<sup>23</sup> J. G. Phelps Stokes, second vice president of the ISS, presided and introduced the speaker. When he accepted the chairmanship of this meeting, he told the audience, he believed that London’s speech would deal broadly with the message of socialism and its meaning for the American people, a message he felt the country needed to hear. But he had learned in the meantime that London’s topic would be much narrower, that it dealt with the inevitable catastrophe London foresaw under capitalism. Stokes therefore wanted his audience to know that he, like many other believers in socialism, did not share London’s assumption that socialism could come about only as a result of some great industrial crisis, followed by an upheaval of the masses. Although the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few had led to abuses of power and might cause widespread unemployment for working people, he remained unconvinced that the predicted catastrophe would follow inevitably. On the contrary, Stokes maintained, the increase of knowledge and the more intelligent organization of our affairs to promote the general welfare would tend to diminish the danger of some overwhelming catastrophe. London would present a contrary view, Stokes concluded; and since he was an honest and able man he deserved the close and respectful attention of his audience.<sup>24</sup>

London, who said at the outset that he believed in “striking between the eyes,” asserted, as he had done at Harvard, that seven million fighters for socialism throughout the world were ready for the complete overthrow of existing society. These fighters would gain new recruits every time a strike was crushed by strikebreakers; and this growing army of the revolution would say, “to hell with the Constitution” to those who were using the Constitution to justify employing strikebreakers and injunctions in labor disputes. When an old soldier in the audience rose to ask London whether the quotation was his or someone else’s, London replied that the remark had been made by a



soldier during the labor troubles in Colorado a few years earlier. At this moment Mother Mary Jones, the legendary labor organizer, leaned out of her box and added that it was a general in the Colorado militia who was responsible for the remark.<sup>25</sup>

One week later London repeated this lecture before a crowded audience of students, faculty, and local citizens assembled in Woolsey Hall of Yale University.<sup>26</sup> Before starting his lecture, London explained to the audience why he had come to Yale. When he attended the University of California at Berkeley, he was disturbed by the indifference of students and faculty to the life around them.

I found the university ... clean and noble,... but I did not find the university alive. I found that the American university had this ideal as phrased by a professor in Chicago University, namely: “the passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence” ... and so I became interested in an attempt to arouse in the minds of the young men of our university an interest in the study of socialism. ... If collegians cannot fight for us, we want them to fight against us.... But what we don’t want is that which obtains today and has obtained in the past of the university, a mere deadness and unconcern and ignorance so far as socialism is concerned. Fight for us or fight against us! Raise your voices one way or the other; be alive!<sup>27</sup>

Lack of passion, lack of vitality, indifference to the suffering of millions of their fellow citizens: so read the indictment that London brought against the members of the university community. In the following years his charges were to be repeated by other ISS spokesmen and, ultimately, echoed by a growing number of student leaders as well. At bottom, his accusation was a reaction, perhaps half-conscious, against the German ideal of pure and disinterested research, an ideal which had come to dominate the American university. The following day the local paper gave a straightforward report of London’s lecture and its success. “The spectacle of an avowed socialist, one of the most conspicuous in the country,” commented an editorial writer in the same issue, “standing upon the platform of Woolsey hall and boldly

advocating his doctrines of revolution, was a sight for Gods and men.” But the editorialist also saw much in London’s talk that badly needed saying. He filled the hall to capacity, the writer believed, because many of those who came were aware of social inequities. For once men come to feel that the existing order does not meet their needs, they will turn “to any cure that promises to improve things.” London, it should be remembered, came in response “to the call of the Yale students, who enjoyed the sympathy of an unusually large audience....” And unless we introduce some necessary reforms, the editorial concluded, “there may be serious trouble in the land.” The *New York Times*, which had not commented editorially upon London’s nearly identical lecture at the Grand Central Palace the week before, now was aroused. It commended London for his frankness in announcing publicly the plans of the socialists to wrest control of society from those who now exercised it and redistribute wealth. But it incorrectly charged London with consigning the Constitution to hell if objections to the socialist program were raised on constitutional grounds. London’s socialism, the editorial warned, “is bloody war—the war of one class in society against other classes.”<sup>28</sup>

The *Times* editorial drew a sharp rejoinder from Upton Sinclair, first vice president of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society and the person responsible for organizing the meetings at Yale, Harvard, and Grand Central Palace. Although he had not been present at Yale, wrote Sinclair, he did hear London’s Grand Central Palace speech, which was read from manuscript and, in essence, repeated at Yale; he felt confident, therefore, that the *Times* had erred on a number of points. In the first place, the “blood-red banner” that London had said would soon be waving everywhere really signified the coming brotherhood of man, as London had explained to his audience. The reference to the Constitution, which the *Times* had found offensive, had been made not by London but by a general of the Colorado militia. And finally, London’s call for the use of force, if necessary, applied only, as London had clearly stated, to countries without free speech and manhood suffrage; in free countries socialists always obeyed the Constitution and the laws of the land.<sup>29</sup>

There were repercussions to London's lecture at Yale in the little town of Derby, Connecticut. The authorities of the Derby Neck Free Library stopped circulating all of London's books and issued this statement:

As Jack London publicly announces he is an anarchist, devoting the Constitution to hell and the government to destruction, we have ordered all of his works withdrawn from circulation, and we urge not only other libraries to do likewise, but all lovers of their country to cease buying his books or taking magazines publishing his stories.<sup>[30](#)</sup>

An editorial in *The Arena* sharply condemned the library officials for having acted on the basis of a garbled version of London's speech; they should have investigated more thoroughly before acting so hastily. But in a companion editorial, Benjamin O. Flower, the editor of the magazine and one of the signers of Sinclair's call, took issue with London for appealing to the workers on the basis of class interest. Such an appeal, he felt, could only harm democracy. At the same time, however, it would be well to recognize that London did not create the existing class divisions; the "plutocracy" had brought them about, and London and other likeminded reformers were asking the workers to recognize this division and to organize in order to protect their rights.<sup>[31](#)</sup>

After his speech at Yale, London returned to his home in Glen Ellen, California. Although he continued to serve as president of the ISS until May 1907, he did not again undertake another lecture tour for the organization. For its part the Intercollegiate Socialist Society now settled down to the job of organizing college students for the study of socialism.

## 2

# The Struggle for Survival

The executive committee of the ISS, which was elected at the organizing meeting of the society, met for the first time that evening. Since the ISS had a number of individual members but as yet no organized college chapters, the first task facing the committee was to make known the existence of the fledgling society to interested students in colleges and universities. The committee voted to mail Sinclair's call to action to institutions of higher education throughout the country, and to supply appropriate literature to all members who would be willing to help gain new members. Shortly thereafter, the committee addressed a brief letter to college graduates known to be socialists or sympathetic to the movement. The ISS, the committee declared, "is now ready to do its work." The organization would select speakers and arrange lecture tours of colleges; prepare a list of books recommended for distribution among college students; and supply pamphlets and leaflets for free distribution among college men and women. Former students could help the cause in several ways. They could contribute money, which was urgently needed; they could arrange for posting of the call on bulletin boards of the colleges they had attended; and they could supply copies of the call to their college literary societies and fraternities.<sup>1</sup>

Later that year the ISS developed still another strategy for organizing chapters. In a front-page appeal in the socialist *The Worker*, signed by Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and J. G. Phelps Stokes, these top ISS officers explained that the organization needed a specific point of contact in each college and university. They set a goal of obtaining the name of at least one student sympathetic to the work of the ISS "in

every college and high school, technical and normal school in the country,” and they requested that interested students send in their own names and that other readers of the appeal supply the names of college students known to them.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Sinclair and his associates were cheered by the knowledge that students had succeeded in organizing socialist study clubs in at least two universities even before the ISS was born: at the University of Wisconsin and the University of California at Berkeley. In the summer of 1905 Ira Cross, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin who had seen Sinclair’s call, responded proudly that students at his university “got the start of you on the College Socialist Club deal by about four years.” Their club, he continued, holds weekly meetings and has a regular program of activities. Further, the president of the graduating class is a socialist, “and the whole Varsity knows it.”<sup>3</sup> In its first year, the club had a membership of eleven students and one professor. At first, all but confirmed socialists were excluded from membership, but this restriction severely limited the club’s activities and threatened to destroy it altogether once its members were graduated. Thus after the club was reorganized in 1904, the restriction was removed, and the club began to flourish. The change in policy led to a change in emphasis. Discussions of socialism and the socialist movement now tended to center on practical problems, such as child labor and workers’ hazardous occupations, rather than on “empty theorizing.” The club, moreover, branched out into adjacent fields of knowledge, making room for every member’s “pet theory.” Some favored the single tax; others advocated nationalism for each ethnic group; still others held “peculiar and original ideas” about the nature of religion.<sup>4</sup>

A second socialist study club, also organized by students before the advent of the ISS, came into existence early in 1905 at the University of California at Berkeley. Students there took the initiative in founding the Social Progress Club after a lecture by Jack London and after having observed the activities of the Ruskin Club.<sup>5</sup> One of the members of the Social Progress Club wrote that they were making good progress despite the fact that the students at Berkeley were somewhat afraid to admit that

they were interested in socialism. The members had considered affiliating with the Socialist party local but had rejected the idea because they believed that as students they had a special point of view. They were obtaining more useful information from their biweekly discussion meetings, he added, than from some of the “dry lectures we half slept through in college.”<sup>6</sup>

But Wisconsin and Berkeley were exceptions. Elsewhere, students eager to organize college chapters faced formidable obstacles. Certainly not the least of these was the very name of the society, suggesting as it did some ill-defined bond with the socialist movement. The word “socialism,” Professor Scudder of Wellesley advised the ISS, “is simply a bogey to most [students].” While Scudder’s assessment was perhaps too pessimistic, it is unquestionably true that most students were either indifferent to socialism or reluctant to be identified with the socialist movement. An exchange between Graham Stokes and a student group at the University of Pennsylvania is instructive in this respect. When Wayne Hummer, president of the Wharton School Association, invited Stokes to address the students at his university, Stokes suggested a talk on socialism. Hummer countered cautiously that he would prefer instead to announce a talk on the relation of the college man to social reform. This topic, he added, would be “more definite” than an address on socialism and, more important, have greater appeal to the majority of students. Just the same, he assured Stokes politely, the students he represented would of course be pleased “to hear all you may have to say in regard to socialism.”<sup>7</sup>

The “bogey” of socialism evidently infected the students at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. As a result, Harry Laidler, the irrepressible optimist, was assailed by a rare moment of doubt. The young Social Study Club at Wesleyan was in trouble, he warned the ISS, because it was exceedingly difficult to persuade students to associate with any organization identified with socialism. The Wesleyan chapter of the Intercollegiate Civic League had proposed a merger with the ISS chapter; since the league was not tainted by socialism, he suggested that cooperation with it might be advantageous. Otherwise, he feared that the chapter would fall apart after the present senior class was

graduated. "I hope that I am wrong," he concluded, "but knowing something of the college student ... I cannot think otherwise."<sup>8</sup>

Still another obstacle facing students interested in the study of socialism was the unavailability of appropriate literature illuminating the meaning of contemporary socialism. Students who had done some reading in the field were likely to agree with the Cornell student who complained that "there is so much hysteria and vague sentimentality" in much of the literature she had read that she found it difficult to pin down basic principles. She also deplored the lack of books on the subject "which are thoughtful and critical without being abstruse." International socialism, she declared, did not interest her in the least, but having read Edward Bellamy and Henry George she was most anxious to learn the views of American socialists which were "up-to-date and not the socialism of twenty-five years ago when conditions in America were different."<sup>9</sup>

Ignorance and fear of socialism could perhaps be overcome, and the hunger for literature could be stilled. Student apathy, on the other hand, was a more serious stumbling block. One observer put it succinctly.

Undergraduates, as a rule, care much for the traditional social customs of the college dormitory and campus; they live in a curious world of their own, it is more in the nature of a play-world or imitation of the larger life outside their institution than a participant in it.

So wrote Franklin H. Giddings at the turn of the century. In contrast, European students, who were living in the real world, had participated for decades "in radical politics and revolutionary movements."<sup>10</sup>

Students sympathetic to socialism often echoed Giddings' analysis. An undergraduate at the Heights campus in New York University wrote that he was thinking of organizing an ISS chapter on his campus. He was aware that students generally were opposed to anything of this nature, but he still believed that it might be possible to start an "enthusiastic circle" which might have some influence on the larger student body at some future time. A Yale student was deeply pessimistic



about the prospects of forming a chapter at his college. Thanking the ISS for the literature sent him, he wondered whether Yale would ever “break out of the clouds of classical mysticism which envelops it from President to freshman. Intellectual thought of the live, living sort is a thing of the past here.” Student apathy also proved to be a hurdle at Northwestern. Unable to organize a chapter at that university, several students made plans to meet in the house of “comrade M’Cluskey,” a member of the Socialist party local at Evanston and an alumnus of Northwestern. “There are now three conscious Socialists in college and one in the faculty,” wrote the putative organizer, and until such time as “the required number had seen fit to awaken” and they could then apply for an ISS charter, they would continue to meet at the home of their friend. He confided, moreover, that the college authorities were hostile at present, and he asked for advice on how to proceed.<sup>11</sup>

The ISS was keenly aware that student inexperience, often bordering on helplessness, presented a major obstacle to success in organizing study chapters. Moreover, the society needed a full-time organizer and had no ready way to communicate personally with interested students. The ISS knows, wrote T. Bayard Collins, then ISS secretary, that students in many institutions of higher learning are ready to go to work, “asking only guidance and support. We have a list of speakers who offer their assistance without charge, and the names of several hundred teachers who are willing to distribute our literature.”<sup>12</sup> Collins was correct in his appraisal of student dependence. When Professor Giddings tactfully suggested to a Columbia student that it might be in the interest of the Columbia chapter to change its name, the student promptly asked the ISS for advice and guidance. Rather tentatively, he suggested that the chapter be called the Political Science Club, Columbia branch, but he left the final choice to Collins. The student would take steps to activate the group and obtain meeting room privileges as soon as “you decide on the name, and formulate its aims....” Similarly, when a chapter was organized at Barnard College, the chapter president plaintively inquired of W. J. Ghent what to do next. Most of the members were quite ignorant of socialism, she



admitted, and she therefore wanted to know what books they should read.<sup>13</sup>

The first chapters to be formally affiliated with the ISS were those at Wesleyan and Columbia. Laidler, filled with enthusiasm about his election to the ISS executive committee, had wanted to form a chapter at Wesleyan immediately upon his return from that exhilarating meeting at Peck's Restaurant. But a heavy schedule of classes, in addition to his extracurricular activities in college debating, in basketball management, and on the rushing committee of the Commons Club, forced him to delay calling the first meeting until January 1906. Laidler was elected president of the Wesleyan Social Study Club, the name adopted by the membership, which represented a "good cross-section" of the student body: future teachers, ministers, scientists, and businessmen.<sup>14</sup> Laidler thought that students at his alma mater had the distinction of having organized the first ISS chapter, "with the possible exception of that in Columbia, formed by William Feigenbaum."<sup>15</sup> Feigenbaum, son of the associate editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, had nominated Laidler for the ISS executive committee at the organizational meeting called by Sinclair. Like the chapter at Wesleyan, the Columbia chapter also did not last more than a few months. The chapter had five members, reported Feigenbaum, and then it "went to sleep." When it woke up in March, it took on new life with fifteen members. It seems that these young men were unable to persuade the few Barnard students they knew to join them because the girls "didn't like to come on the campus with the boys." Once again the chapter faltered. J. Rubin, the student who had been advised by Professor Giddings to change the chapter name, attempted to enlist his support. Giddings expressed sympathy with the aims of the ISS but declined to take an active part in it. He suggested instead that the chapter ask Professor Charles A. Beard who was more in touch with undergraduate life than he was. In 1908 the ISS once more reorganized the chapter but not until November 1909 did the Columbia Socialist Society take root at that institution.<sup>16</sup>

## II

During those early years the ISS had little income and depended entirely upon volunteers for all of its work. The young society was fortunate, therefore, to be able to count on the support of a group of men who had shared a common experience a few years earlier and had forged strong bonds of friendship at that time. At the University Settlement in New York, novelist Ernest Poole had met Graham Stokes, William English Walling, Robert Hunter, and Leroy Scott, among others; all of them became influential in the ISS. When Sinclair had been doing research for *The Jungle*, he had frequently visited the University of Chicago Settlement where he had formed lasting friendships with reformers and socialists. Most settlement workers later joined the Progressive movement and, like most progressives, continued to advocate reform rather than abolition of the existing economic system. But some who had worked in settlements, including those mentioned earlier, came to feel that settlement work alone was inadequate to cope with the massive social problems they had encountered in their work, and many of them joined the growing socialist movement.<sup>[17](#)</sup>

To Sinclair and his friends, as it was to most Americans, the early twentieth century was a time of buoyant optimism, of belief in inevitable progress. It was, as Henry May remarks, a time “of sureness and unity, at least on the surface of American life.” When people looked back on the nineteenth century, he adds, they professed to see unbroken progress; they were inclined to overlook the scars left by continuous labor wars and agrarian uprisings. Although they shared the general optimism of most educated Americans, the founders of the ISS were unwilling to sanction a denial of past social strife. Social injustice had existed in the past; it existed now; it would end only with the triumph of socialism. Sinclair was convinced that students were indifferent to the suffering around them because they were unaware that a solution to the problem was available and that the socialist movement had in fact proposed it. Students were ignorant about social conditions because, as he knew from his own experience as a student, nobody was teaching

them the facts of industrial life. Sinclair was willing to teach them—slowly, patiently. With his wife and Strobell and a few other friends, he sat up nights until the early hours of the morning, wrapping literature for shipment to college students.<sup>18</sup>

The ISS executive committee was well aware that distributing literature to eager students was only a first step. If the ISS was to establish study groups in the major colleges and universities of the country, the society needed the services of at least one person who could give substantially all of his time to its work. The members of the executive committee were giving much of their time to further the cause, but they were busy people having other interests and commitments as well. Sinclair thought that Harry Laidler was precisely the kind of person the ISS needed as a full-time organizer and office manager. Laidler was young, vigorous, hard-working, scholarly; he was, moreover, a dedicated socialist and an experienced speaker. If the ISS were ever to amount to more than just a paper organization, it needed a Laidler or someone like him. Just four months after the ISS had been founded, Sinclair wrote Laidler that he was thinking of raising a fund to pay someone who would devote full time to the work of the society. The person he had in mind would take care of the office work and write to several hundred people who had agreed to help in distributing literature and organizing study chapters. Most important, a “wide awake man” would, as a start, visit colleges and universities in the East “to lecture and stir things up.” If the executive committee were to approve his plan, Sinclair concluded, would Laidler be available and interested in the position for a “moderate compensation plus expenses.”<sup>19</sup> Laidler, who was then finishing his junior year at Wesleyan, declined Sinclair’s offer since he intended to complete college and was unsure about his future plans.

After London’s resignation in May 1907 Graham Stokes assumed the presidency of the ISS, and that fall the executive committee authorized the employment of an organizer on a temporary basis. Fred H. Merrick, a devoted young socialist, started to work in January 1908. By May of that year, the society reported that chapters had been organized in seven eastern institutions, namely, Barnard, Columbia, New York University,

New York University Law School, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard. Merrick also visited a number of other institutions and laid the groundwork for future chapters. During the 1907–8 academic year, Stokes's sister, Helen Stokes, and Mary Sanford, both members of the executive committee, visited Vassar, Wellesley, and Bryn Mawr where they talked informally on socialism. It was the first of many trips to the women's colleges they were to undertake for the ISS in the following years.<sup>20</sup>

The organization of the Princeton chapter took place in an atmosphere somewhat akin to a carnival. Merrick's appearance at Princeton had been heralded in the college paper. When he arrived, some five hundred students paraded around the campus displaying red flags and setting off fire crackers. More than three hundred students and almost the entire economics faculty gathered in Dodge Hall for Merrick's lecture. For the first forty-five minutes, Merrick reports, there were "good natured" attempts to break up the meeting, but then his audience became more serious and kept asking questions until midnight. After the lecture, those most interested adjourned to a dormitory and kept up the questioning until the early hours of the morning. By the following year the chapter reported that it had eighteen members, of whom only two or three were "thorough Socialists." The others ranged "from warm though not completely convinced sympathizers to interested skeptics." And although the chapter maintained cordial relations with the New York office, the members thought it unwise to affiliate with the ISS at that time.<sup>21</sup>

In 1908 Merrick also assisted in the organization of the Barnard chapter, consisting of sixteen members. Any student, socialist or nonsocialist, who was at all interested in a thorough study of socialism, the chapter announced, was invited to join. Later that year the chapter sensed a "strong interest" in the study of socialism as shown by the large attendance at a lecture by Professor Beard given under its auspices.<sup>22</sup> In its first year of existence, the Barnard chapter became involved in a dispute with the college administration, into which Columbia President Nicholas M. Butler was drawn because of outside pressure. It started with a lecture by Rose Pastor Stokes, ex-cigar maker

and dynamic socialist speaker. In her lecture, she dealt with socialism as a practical possibility, and she attempted to sketch what life would be like under a socialist form of government. Ralph M. Easley, chairman of the executive council of the National Civic Federation and an ally of Samuel Gompers in their common crusade against socialism, protested against her lecture in a letter to Butler. "I notice that Mrs. Phelps Stokes made quite a hit at Barnard last night. Can't we have Mr. Moffett and Mrs. Valesh invited up there to talk?" Moffett, he explained, formerly edited the *Bricklayer's Journal* and was one of the best speakers in the labor movement. Mrs. Valesh was serving as assistant editor of the *American Federationist* and was highly regarded as "a splendid talker. She will tell these people officially that the American Federation of Labor is against socialism."<sup>23</sup>

Butler, who was a member of the National Civic Federation's executive council, promptly forwarded Easley's letter to W. T. Brewster, acting dean of Barnard. "I do not know anything about how Mrs. Stokes came to be speaking at Barnard," he began, "but I enclose a letter which her presence there has brought forth, and think it might be well to have one of the persons named asked by the same body that invited her, so that both sides of the matter might be heard." Brewster replied at length, explaining Barnard's policy concerning the official recognition of student groups and outside speakers invited to the campus by recognized student groups. To gain recognition as a legitimate student organization, an organization had to be approved both by the student council and the faculty committee on student organizations. The Barnard Socialist Club had been so approved and was therefore "a responsible body." As required, its program had been submitted to the student council which then submitted it to the faculty committee for its approval. This procedure aimed not "to curtail freedom of utterance, but ... to prevent the exploitation of students from irresponsible parties from without." Brewster further explained that he had been careful "not to offer encouragements or discouragements to these propaganda societies." Although he had often been invited to introduce outside speakers, he had always refused to do so; at the same time, however, he had insisted on allowing any authorized student organization fully to

express its opinions in order not to encourage “a feeling of martyrdom....” This was his policy, he wrote; somewhat apprehensively, he asked whether Butler agreed. “It is well to keep yourself free from any official association with propaganda of any sort,” Butler replied approvingly, “and at the same time to have responsible and authorized student associations free, under the usual restrictions, to invite any responsible person whom they choose to hear.”<sup>24</sup>

Some time later Mamie Rifkin, a Barnard delegate to the first ISS convention, gave further details on the circumstances surrounding the Rose Pastor Stokes lecture. Before Mrs. Stokes’s appearance at Barnard, she explained, the faculty had shown no interest whatsoever in the speakers invited by the club. But after the lecture and the ensuing publicity, she had been summoned by letter to Brewster’s office. At their meeting Brewster informed her that college rules required prior faculty approval of outside speakers and that, in the future, the club would have to obtain advance approval for such speakers. To remain in the good graces of the dean, Miss Rifkin told the delegates, the chapter invited a prominent antisocialist speaker to address them at their very next meeting. He turned out to be that same Mr. Moffett whom Easley had recommended to Butler as an antidote to Mrs. Stokes. Merely a coincidence? Perhaps, but since Butler had “suggested” to Brewster that Moffett or Mrs. Valesh be invited by the Barnard Socialist Club, it is more than likely that Brewster, in turn, urged Miss Rifkin at their interview to invite Moffett. In any case, Moffett’s antisocialist lecture disappointed his listeners because he avoided giving “sound scientific reasons” for his views.<sup>25</sup>

The incident at Barnard is instructive in several respects. The Barnard Socialist Club, it will be recalled, had invited Mrs. Stokes without benefit of prior faculty approval. Such independent action by a student organization, especially since it concerned a controversial speaker, would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. But meanwhile, the faculty, increasingly oriented toward research, had been willing, even eager, to delegate certain aspects of student discipline to student councils or similar organs of student self-government. The student council, moreover, served as a buffer and mitigated tensions between



faculty and students, thereby preventing clashes that had been endemic throughout most of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Of course, the faculty could and often did take back its authority over student activities. It did so at Barnard as a result of the Stokes affair. Nonetheless, the emergence of student councils did serve to erode faculty control over the extracurriculum, thus making it somewhat easier for ISS chapters to invite speakers who might have been excluded had the faculty been in sole control. Administrative opposition was, of course, another matter. As will be shown, administrators could and sometimes did interfere with chapter activities whenever they felt that these activities threatened the interests of their institutions.

### III

One of the first chapters organized by Merrick was at the University of Pennsylvania. The chapter found it difficult to get off the ground because of administrative opposition, condemned by the ISS as the “maladroitness of terrified bigotry” at Benjamin Franklin’s institution. In quick succession the provost refused permission for lectures by the Reverend Alexander Irvine and John Spargo, both prominent socialists. But Henry Flury, the president of the young chapter, firmly believed that the ISS would triumph in time both at his institution and elsewhere. Without a trace of self-consciousness he expressed the conviction that the movement which had been “so ably championed by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Ferdinand Lasalle [*sic*—all of whom were college men—[would] obtain a strong footing in what is now conceded to be the last stronghold of capitalism—the university.”<sup>27</sup>

Merrick also ran into trouble at the College of the City of New York. For almost two years, he reported, President John H. Finley persistently refused to allow the establishment of an ISS chapter at his college. After several “evasive replies” from Finley, Merrick arranged for a meeting with interested students in February 1908, but once again Finley vetoed the plan. A socialist member of the CCNY faculty, Frederick E.

Breithut, professor of chemistry, was asked to intercede with Finley, but he too failed. Finally, the executive committee of the ISS took up the matter and instructed Secretary Ghent to investigate. Should Finley persist in his refusal to sanction the formation of a chapter, Ghent was instructed to request the *New York Call*, a socialist daily, to publicize Finley's refusal. Not until December 1909 did George Kirkpatrick, who in the meantime had replaced Merrick as organizer, report to the executive committee that students at CCNY and the Normal College had succeeded in organizing a joint chapter.<sup>28</sup>

For the next few years the chapter led a precarious existence. Administrative pressure almost proved fatal, but the chapter survived because it received strong support from the ISS central office and a determined group of students refused to let it die. It was reorganized several times in 1911, and toward the end of the year the student newspaper took notice of its existence for the first time. A study chapter of the ISS had been organized at the college, reported the paper, for all "whose tendencies are socialistic or who may care to learn" about socialism. The chapter would make an effort to secure both socialist and antisocialist speakers. But even then the college administration continued its efforts to undermine the chapter. In the spring of 1912, the executive committee learned that the chapter members were having trouble in securing a meeting room and that President Finley seemed to be "disinclined" to make things easy for an avowedly socialist campus organization. Finally, the executive committee asked the socially prominent Stokes to see Finley in order to determine whether the administration was discriminating against the chapter.<sup>29</sup>

Although only a very few chapters were in existence in 1908, the young society was already attracting public attention. James Creelman, a well-known publicist, noting the rapid growth of the socialist movement, warned that it had invaded "the citadels of orthodoxy represented by colleges and churches...." Among the "trouble-makers" nurtured by socialism he counted the members of the ISS, and Sinclair's call to found the ISS was a program "to seduce the minds of American college students to a friendly consideration of socialism...." The ISS itself, according to Creelman, was an "amazing attempt to corrupt the



Americanism of college students throughout the country...,”<sup>30</sup> Generally, the ISS ignored such attacks in the belief that they did not deserve to be taken seriously and that college students would be won over in spite of outbursts such as Creelman’s. Thus when Morris Hillquit lectured at Cornell under ISS auspices and received an enthusiastic reception from 350 students and faculty members, the ISS exulted. The willingness of so many members of a university community to pay admission and listen politely for two hours was seen as clear proof that “the imbecile whine about ‘anarchy’ ... may yet fail—even in the colleges.”<sup>31</sup>

## IV

The Harvard Socialist Club, founded in March 1908, was one of the few ISS chapters that neither asked nor expected the central office to help it get started. In fact the club, while maintaining cordial relations with the central office, did not apply for an ISS charter until nearly three years after its founding. Its announced aim was “to educate its members and, in a broader sense, the whole University, in the discussion of the radical social thought of the day.”<sup>32</sup> From the beginning the Harvard Socialist Club was perhaps the most vigorous of all the chapters. In part the club’s preeminence sprang from Harvard’s traditions which were hospitable to iconoclasm. An alumnus, pointing to such Harvard-trained rebels as Samuel Adams, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, called Harvard “the mother of radicals.”<sup>33</sup> The Harvard milieu, moreover, was becoming increasingly cosmopolitan, and among those who organized the club were brilliant and restless men who built a solid foundation for the chapter. Shortly before the club was established, W. R. Eastman, a Harvard student, wrote to the ISS that it would be impossible to reach the students without the support of some of the professors; for the students, he asserted, follow their professors “like a flock of sheep.” Some of their professors saw the logic of the socialist position but felt

they could not afford to identify themselves with the socialist movement at the time. Generally, he concluded, the professors are “too old to be touched by anything short of an earthquake or a revolution...,”<sup>34</sup> Just two weeks later the Harvard Socialist Club was formally established.

In later years the ISS credited Walter Lippmann with starting the chapter. It appears, however, that the preliminary discussions leading to its organization were held between two other students, Jerome Randall and Judson Strong. At the organizing meeting on March 10, 1908, those present elected a three-member executive committee made up of Randall, Lippmann, and Strong, with Randall serving as chairman.<sup>35</sup> Two days later, Lippmann and Randall met in Lippmann’s room to draft a constitution, and Lippmann seems to have taken firm control of the club’s fortunes at that moment.<sup>36</sup> Among the forty-one students who signed the constitution were Hey wood C. Broun, Osmond K. Fraenkel, Kenneth R. Macgowan, Carl A. L. Binger, and Nicholas Kelley. Lippmann’s name headed the list. That the Harvard Socialist Club filled a vacuum at Harvard was suggested by an editorial in the *Harvard Crimson*. The approaching election of 1908 had caused the reactivation of various clubs which appeared quadrennially to promote the candidacy of a particular candidate. The editorialist noted this activity, but wondered what had happened to the once active Political club which had promoted good government. The field of activity for such a club was great, the writer noted, for the country was undoubtedly experiencing “an unprecedented moral awakening... If the Political club did not seize this opportunity, he concluded, we may lose faith in the ability of undergraduates “to deal...with the larger questions beyond the horizon of college life.”<sup>37</sup>

The Harvard Socialist Club quickly moved into the vacuum. After the election of 1908, Lippmann blasted student apathy regarding the important political and social issues of the day. He deplored the “utter disappearance” of the Harvard Republican Club after the election of its candidate, William H. Taft, and the apparent inability of the inactive Democratic club to seize the opportunities before it. A spirit of dissatisfaction, he maintained, was a prerequisite to the development of enthusiasm. He thought it was

ridiculous for young men to be “conservative,” for it means that they will probably be “standpatters” when they grow older. Men who are “orthodox” when they are young are in danger of being middle-aged all their lives.<sup>38</sup>

Two months after the founding of the chapter, the Harvard Socialist Club held its first public meeting. The featured speaker was Edmond Kelley, a Harvard alumnus and a member of the ISS executive committee. Kelley addressed an audience of about two hundred, a turnout which Lippmann called “a solid success.” Administrative opposition presented a mild problem, however. “I may say to you in perfect confidence,” Lippmann wrote to Merrick, “that the University does not look upon us with great pleasure. We were compelled in a very humiliating way to furnish proofs of Mr. Kelley’s respectability.” But in spite of all obstacles, “we are prospering in a small way.” The following academic year, the Harvard Socialist Club heard the noted muckraker Lincoln Steffens lecture on “Present Day Opportunities for Radicals,” and Lippmann read a paper on “Incentive under Socialism.” Rose Pastor Stokes was scheduled to speak on woman suffrage, but since she was ill at the time, her husband substituted for her. One year after the club’s founding, its members formally recognized Lippmann’s leading role by electing him president for the following year.<sup>39</sup>

In the spring of 1910, the Harvard Socialist Club boldly petitioned the college administration for a course on socialism. The petition, addressed to “the President and Faculty of Harvard College,” read:

We, the undersigned students of Harvard University, feeling that the importance of Socialism as an economic program and a political and social issue justifies the existence of a course on Socialism in the University, and feeling that the present instruction is too restricted to present the subject with the fulness and emphasis warranted by the interest taken in it by the student body, do ... respectfully petition that a general course on Socialism be offered during the year 1910–11 which shall

1. treat the historical development of Socialism, including ... the fundamental economic theories on which Socialism is based; and which shall lay stress on the concrete modern aspect of Socialism rather than on the abstract dialectics of that movement;

2. which shall offer an appreciative critique of the aims of the modern leaders of Socialism and of the means whereby they propose to attain those aims, endeavoring ... well and fairly to expose the weak points and uphold the strong point of the doctrine involved; and
3. which shall examine the effect of Socialistic doctrines as evinced by recent legislation, particularly ... in Europe and Australia.

The petitioners suggested that the course be open to sophomores who had taken Economics I, and to juniors and seniors without any prerequisite.<sup>40</sup>

Lippmann's pragmatic approach to the study of socialism is clearly reflected in certain key phrases of the petition. He insisted, for example, that the proper study of the subject must stress its "concrete modern aspect" rather than the "abstract dialectics" of socialism. Next, he asked for an "appreciative critique" of the movement's ends and means and for a balanced treatment of its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, he was willing to put socialist theory to the test of practical experience in those countries which had recently adopted socialist measures. About three hundred Harvard students signed the petition, but there is no evidence that the administration was moved to action in the 1910–11 academic year. Yet support for a course in socialism was growing among the students. An editorial in an influential student magazine asserted bluntly that no existing course in economics or government so much as "hints that the combination of corrupt politics and corrupt business is a potent factor in our economic organization, that it overrides all the laws of supply and demand, competition and what not, which Economics I holds sacred, and bends them to its will." The *Harvard Crimson* also supported the petition of the Harvard Socialist Club, but from a rather conservative perspective. A course on socialism, the editorialist held, would substitute thorough discussion for much of the "loose talk" on the subject current among some undergraduates whose enthusiasm for socialism outdistanced their knowledge. Even more important, a formal course on socialism would prepare Harvard students to help form "a sound public opinion" after their graduation. This need was urgent, the writer warned, because "the danger of Socialism in the hands of the masses is great."<sup>41</sup>

The Harvard administration was listening and in the end it acted. The petition of the Harvard Socialist Club phrased in Lippmann's lucid prose prepared the ground; others followed his lead. Perhaps the administration was also swayed by the argument in the *Harvard Illustrated* that Harvard's present offerings did not adequately deal with the real world of economics and politics, or by the implicit warning in the *Crimson* of incipient revolt unless a trained elite properly interpreted socialism to the masses. Whatever the reason, in the 1911–12 academic year, a course "Socialism and the Social Movement in Europe" taught by William E. Rappard, a legal scholar, was offered by Harvard for the first time. In 1912–13 the course title was changed to "History of Modern Socialism," again given by Rappard, who had meanwhile been promoted to assistant professor. In the 1913–14 academic year, the course now called "The Theories of Contemporary Socialism" was taught by another instructor, W. C. Fisher.<sup>42</sup>

Summing up the year's work at Harvard shortly after his graduation in 1910, Lippmann reported that the public lectures sponsored by the Harvard Socialist Club had been very successful. But the lectures alone did not give a clear picture of the club's real impact, he added, "because we deliberately adopted what is called [a] 'Policy of Permeation.'" The goal of this strategy was

to make reactionaries, stand-patters; stand-patters, conservative liberals; and conservative liberals and liberals, radicals; and radicals, socialists. There we leave them to their own resources. In other words, we tried to move every one up a few pegs. We did not insist on all or nothing. We preferred to have the whole mass move a little to having a few move altogether out of sight.

The chapter reaped a tangible reward for its activities last spring, continued Lippmann, when about three hundred students signed a petition for a course in socialism. Certainly, not all of the signers were socialists, "but all of them were open-minded."<sup>43</sup> Lippmann's reference to the club's adoption of the policy of permeation suggests that his socialism owed more to Graham Wallas, the Fabian socialist whom

Lippmann had come to admire when Wallas lectured at Harvard, and to Lippmann's emerging technocratic inclinations, than to Karl Marx.

When Lippmann left Harvard, the club was well established. It started the 1910–11 academic year with almost fifty members, “all of whom have the best intentions of paying their dues.” But they still looked to Lippmann for leadership and guidance and were impatiently awaiting his visit the following month. “The club needs more ginger,” wrote one of his lieutenants, “and we all need your advice.”<sup>44</sup>

## V

During the formative years of the ISS, its activities consisted largely of distributing literature and arranging lectures in as many colleges as could be reached. One of the society's “best sellers” early in its history was a reprint of a brief article by Professor Edward A. Ross entitled “Political Decay,” in which Ross laid the blame for the decay of national and state government on the corrupting influence of large sums of money spent by business interests to influence legislation.<sup>45</sup> Among the lecturers sent to the colleges in those years were members of the executive committee, including Morris Hillquit and Graham Stokes, as well as other prominent socialists, such as Eugene V. Debs and John Spargo. Together they reached considerable numbers of students. In the spring of 1909, for instance, Stokes and his wife undertook a one-month tour lecturing before students and faculty members in a number of New England colleges. Wherever they spoke, they distributed ISS literature free of charge or at nominal cost. Again, in the election campaign of 1908, “Gene” Debs, perennial candidate of the Socialist party, visited Madison, Wisconsin, in his “red special,” the campaign train in which he toured the country. At a meeting sponsored by the Wisconsin Socialist Club, he declared his faith in and support for this club and other student socialist clubs and for their accomplishments. Such clubs, he told his audience, were attracting students eager for the truth; these students were thinking and thus were capable of detecting falsehood.<sup>46</sup>



The Wisconsin Socialist Club was solidly established by this time. The club, it will be recalled, was one of the very few that were organized by students several years before the birth of the ISS. And while the chapter at this time still considered it unwise to affiliate with the ISS, the ISS executive committee never refused to furnish speakers or offer other services to the club. Indeed, as a matter of policy the ISS, although preferring that study clubs affiliate with the national organization, did not insist on formal ties.

In January of 1910 the Wisconsin Socialist Club became unwittingly involved in the uproar caused by the visit to Madison of Emma Goldman, the celebrated anarchist. Goldman came uninvited in the hope that some student club would be willing to listen to her views on anarchism. On the morning of January 25 Carl Hookstadt, president of the Socialist club, happened to note that Alexander Berkman, Goldman's manager, was posting notices of her lectures on trees and telephone poles in Madison. Hookstadt told Berkman that he would like to meet Miss Goldman upon her arrival. Although the Socialist club was "diametrically opposed" to Emma Goldman's views on anarchism, Hookstadt told a reporter for the college daily, the club's members admired her fight for free speech and against existing social evils. Hookstadt met Miss Goldman on the evening of January 25 and, with the permission of Arthur Jorgensen, secretary of the university YMCA, arranged for a meeting with her on the following day at the YMCA building. President Charles Van Hise, who later investigated the incident, reported that although no general notice was given, news of the meeting spread by word of mouth among the members of the club and other students and that "a considerable group of students" attended Miss Goldman's lecture.<sup>47</sup>

When the Madison press criticized the club's role in the affair, Hookstadt invoked the university's traditional commitment to free speech and the search for truth. It is the club's purpose, he noted in a letter to the college paper, "to study and discuss socialism and all social questions." In pursuit of this aim the Socialist club had invited lecturers representing a wide range of views, among them single taxers, socialists, sociologists, and ministers. "Strange as it may appear to some

minds,” he said in an allusion to criticism in the local press, “we have as yet found no way to intellectual truth except through discussion and investigation.” That is why he had invited Miss Goldman to address the club and give her views on the relation between anarchism and socialism. “Liberalism does not mean agreement with others’ views,” he declared, “but allowing others to disagree with you.”<sup>48</sup>

## VI

Early in 1910, the ISS felt ready to call its first convention.<sup>49</sup> Some thirty-five delegates, representing seven institutions of higher learning, attended the sessions; delegates from more than a dozen other institutions were unable to attend because of midyear examinations or lack of money. But most of those who could not come had submitted written reports to be presented to the convention. The delegates heard discussions on the relation between socialism and labor legislation and on ways of strengthening cooperation between the college chapters and the parent organization.<sup>50</sup> When the delegates gathered for the second annual convention in December 1910, they were pleased to learn that William Dean Howells, dean of American writers, had sent greetings and hailed the students “who are including humanity among the humanities!” Sinclair, who attended the sessions, was certain that the struggle for survival had been won. In the early days, he told the delegates, the ISS started a chapter at some institution, only to see it die in a short while. At another institution, the president “sat down” on a new chapter before it could be firmly established. But now he felt “like a father who suddenly finds his child grown up.” Morris Hillquit, who in 1901 had been one of the architects of the unified Socialist party and knew something about the problems of organization building, was also pleased. At a reception for the delegates, he told them that “every member of our Society has good reason to rejoice in the Society’s growth and accomplishment.”<sup>51</sup>



In truth the ISS seemed on its way. A few short years before this convention, the society had been merely a paper organization, an idea conceived by Sinclair and nurtured by him and a handful of friends. There now existed sixteen undergraduate and two alumni chapters. Money was still a problem, always would be a problem, but income had grown steadily since the 1905–6 fiscal year when it was less than \$300; in 1908–9 income exceeded \$1000 for the first time.<sup>52</sup> From 1907 to 1910, the society had its office in the Rand School of Social Science, and the school's secretaries W. J. Ghent and Algernon Lee also served the ISS in this capacity. But late in 1910, the ISS acquired its own headquarters, a move marking its growing independence. During this formative period, ISS sponsored lecturers included Lincoln Steffens, Eugene V. Debs, Charles Edward Russell, Robert Hunter, J. G. Phelps Stokes, Rose Pastor Stokes, Alexander Irvine, Morris Hillquit, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Professors Charles A. Beard, William James, and John Bates Clark.<sup>53</sup>

Chapter members, too, began to feel that they were making progress. The president of the Barnard chapter, for example, reported that the preceding year the chapter had succeeded in part in realizing its goal of changing the attitude towards socialism on her campus “from ignorant hostility to friendly curiosity.” Similarly, the outgoing secretary of the Columbia chapter reported at the end of the 1909–10 academic year that the chapter with thirty-eight members was now on a solid foundation. Every lecturer had drawn an audience of between 300 and 350 persons, but Debs had attracted at least 1,100, necessitating a last-minute change from Earl Hall to the larger Horace Mann Auditorium. At their regular study meetings, members had read their own papers on the relation of socialism to unemployment, poverty, education, war, labor, and the trusts.<sup>54</sup> One of the most enthusiastic reports came from Cornell University. The chapter was doing well, wrote Vladimir Karapetoff, a Russian-born socialist. Karapetoff, Professor of Electrical Engineering at Cornell, claimed there was “no more sneering at socialism among thoughtful people [*sic*].” In fact, he added, professors and the clergy were being rapidly converted to socialism because they realized that they too were “in the ranks of the proletariat.” In a more philosophical mood,

Lippmann made light of the contribution of the Harvard Socialist Club. “There has been an awakening at Harvard in the last three years. I am inclined to think that the club is a good deal more of a symptom than a cause.”<sup>55</sup> Lippmann’s assessment was correct in part. In retrospect, the Harvard Socialist Club (and, one might add, the ISS) was clearly a child of the larger movement of social protest and reform during the Progressive era. Nonetheless, one feels that Lippmann was much too modest in evaluating his own role and that of the club in stimulating interest in political and economic questions among Harvard students.

At the last meeting of the ISS executive committee in the 1909–10 fiscal year, Stokes proposed that Harry Laidler be chosen organizer for the coming year. Upon motion by René Hoguet, president of the New York alumni chapter, the executive committee voted its approval, employing Laidler as of June 1, 1910, at a salary of \$16.67 a week.<sup>56</sup> Laidler’s election opened a new chapter in the life of the ISS. For the first time, the society had the services of a person who managed the central office and also spent a good part of his time as an organizer in the field, assisting in the organization of new chapters and reviving dormant chapters. Laidler was affable, hard-working, cheerful. He had been serving on the executive committee since the organization’s inception, moreover, and his commitment to the cause championed by the ISS was beyond question. Upton Sinclair, who had offered the job to Laidler four years earlier, had reason to be satisfied.

### 3

## In Search of Ideology.

The constitution of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society declared that it was the society's goal

to promote an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women, graduate and undergraduate, by the formation of Study Chapters in the universities, colleges and high schools; by furnishing speakers, and placing standard Socialist books and periodicals in college libraries and reading-rooms....\*

Two questions arise immediately in connection with this formulation. First, why study socialism? Second, and perhaps even more important, whose brand of socialism should be studied? Sinclair's call for the formation of the ISS had asserted flatly that in view of recent socialist successes at the polls, college-trained men and women could no longer afford to ignore the forward march of the socialist movement. The principles championed by this movement, moreover, would prove to be the cure for many existing social and economic problems. Leonard D. Abbott, one of the signers of the call and the man who had introduced Sinclair to the study of socialism, went beyond that. The socialist movement, he claimed early in 1906, was the single most important influence in politics, in religion, in art, in science, in literature, and in drama. Thus college students needed greater knowledge of this movement, and the ISS would attempt to satisfy the need through the written and spoken word. He confidently predicted that the young society would soon be "a strong and powerful organization" which now

invited American college youth to join “the greatest cause and the greatest ideal that ever stirred the hearts of men.”<sup>1</sup>

College men and women, John Spargo asserted on behalf of the ISS, had a special obligation to study socialism, for from their ranks would come an increasing proportion of future leaders in government, in the sciences, and in the professions. As a simple matter of “civic patriotism,” future judges, legislators, and public officials ought to know the principles of socialism, for these leaders would most assuredly have to recognize the existence of the socialist movement in their daily work. Thus to be prepared, college students ought to give socialism a fair and impartial hearing. On another occasion, Spargo underscored the significance of the worldwide socialist movement. Within one brief generation, he told Yale students, socialism had grown from small beginnings into one of the biggest mass movements in history, with nearly ten million people throughout the world voting the socialist ticket. Both Germany and France were likely to go socialist in the near future; the challenge facing college men, therefore, was to study and attempt to understand a movement of this magnitude.<sup>2</sup> What is noteworthy in Spargo’s analysis is his emphasis on the political process. The socialist movement was triumphing everywhere at the ballot box and socialists, he suggested, would take power legally, by gaining new adherents and winning elections.

Two years after his graduation from Harvard Walter Lippmann, then executive assistant to the Reverend George Lunn, socialist mayor of Schenectady, New York, gave still another reason why college students should study socialism. The student leaving college, he wrote, is confronted by “strikes and panics, poor pay and long hours, terrible jobs and no jobs, hate and bitterness, ugliness and filth, cynicism and corruption.” Without an understanding of socialism, Lippmann maintained, students were unable to comprehend the facts of modern industrial life. And since the colleges had failed to educate students about the realities of life outside the college walls, students at Harvard and elsewhere had taken matters into their own hands.<sup>3</sup>

All well and good. Yet the question remains: whose brand of socialism should be studied? While ISS spokesmen always maintained

that the sole purpose of the society was to promote the study of socialism in colleges and universities, they never specified the kind of socialism they wished to promote. This omission was hardly accidental, for in truth the ISS did not advocate the study of any single doctrine that one could readily identify as the brainchild of a particular theorist. By and large, the membership of the ISS was in broad agreement with the goals of the socialist movement as expressed periodically in the platform statements of the Socialist Party of America. Indeed, many members of the ISS executive committee were also members of the Socialist party; and Morris Hillquit, John Spargo, and Graham Stokes served as members of the party's national executive committee at one time or another.\* But this did not result in either organizational or ideological control of the ISS by the party. Like the old-line parties, the Socialist party was essentially a loose affiliation of state parties and lacked an all-powerful central authority able to enforce doctrinal purity. Even Eugene V. Debs, perhaps the most charismatic figure ever produced by American socialism, did not attempt to impose his ideas on his party.<sup>4</sup>

The ideology of the Socialist party was rooted more in American than in European texts. At the party's founding convention in 1901, notes David A. Shannon, only a handful of delegates had more than a nodding acquaintance with Marxian theory. Their anticapitalist orientation, he continues, probably owed more to Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* than to Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.<sup>5</sup> Yet Marx was the acknowledged master of those professing belief in "scientific" socialism, and most of the individuals influential in the ISS had a more or less thorough knowledge of socialist theory.<sup>6</sup> Although theorists might differ on particular points of doctrine, the lines separating them tended to be blurred. Spargo put it succinctly.

The "opportunists" of today may tomorrow be found taking a position which places him among the "impossibilists," and the most vociferous attack upon the "intellectuals" is likely to come from an

intellectual, much to the amazement of the proletarians in the movement.<sup>7</sup>

The ISS took no official position on ideological issues debated within the international socialist movement or even the Socialist Party of America. The society's journal *The Intercollegiate Socialist* was hospitable to widely diverging views on socialism and related topics; its lecturers could and did speak out freely without fear of censure; and its recommended reading lists were catholic in scope, encompassing both proponents of various shades of socialism and forceful opponents. There were no groupings within the ISS that could neatly be labeled as the left, right, or center of the movement. On the other hand, some ISS spokesmen, through their writings and public pronouncements, came to be identified with the ideological tendencies of leading European socialists, particularly Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein. Kautsky, literary executor of the Marxist corpus, enjoyed enormous authority in the Second International. Although he remained an orthodox Marxist, he attempted to mediate between revisionists and leftists in the powerful German Social Democratic party. His abhorrence of bloodshed led him to postulate that a revolution need not necessarily involve violence; if an oppressed class were to come to power through social change, that in itself would constitute the revolution. Besides, impersonal economic forces at work in the modern world were inexorably changing the material conditions of human existence, thereby exposing the inherent contradictions of modern capitalism. In time the impact of these forces would inevitably lead to the substitution of socialism for a decaying capitalism, thus obviating the need for violent revolution. Bernstein, friend and disciple of Friedrich Engels, was the exponent of revisionism in the Second International. Class war, Bernstein held, was weakening and industrial crises were decreasing in severity; there was thus no need to fear a catastrophic clash between capitalists and the proletariat. Above all, Bernstein stressed the supreme importance of the socialist movement and the gradual self-emancipation of the working class, rather than some distant goal of apocalyptic revolution.<sup>8</sup> Echoes of Kautsky and Bernstein and of some American writers can be heard in

much of the literature sponsored or recommended by the ISS and in the pronouncements of its lecturers.

## II

Perhaps the best way to get at the brand of socialism promoted by the ISS is to examine the society's thinking on such key concepts of socialist philosophy as economic determinism, the class struggle, the policy of immediate demands, and the role of the state in the socialist commonwealth. Brief consideration will also be given to the society's attitude towards the trusts and private property.

Whatever the differences on matters of doctrine within the ISS, there was general agreement regarding the central role of Marx in providing the theoretical basis for the remarkable growth of the international socialist movement. Yet the further growth of this movement, declared Spargo at Barnard, no longer depended on the accuracy of Marxist theories. Even if Marx was wrong in every one of his conclusions, the socialist movement had now developed its own momentum and would continue to grow. Marx's role as a thinker was secure precisely because his theories, if rightly interpreted, did indeed form the basis of contemporary social thought.<sup>9</sup> There was substantial agreement, incidentally, on the significance of socialism as the movement of the working class. Morris Hillquit, for example, defined socialism as "a criticism of modern social conditions, a theory of social progress, an ideal of social organization, and a practical movement of the masses."<sup>10</sup>

In concert with socialists everywhere, the ISS believed that economic activity to satisfy material needs formed the basis of every historical epoch. The prevailing mode of production and exchange of goods and services determined the property relations of a given society; these relations in turn were instrumental in shaping the institutions of that society, including its government, its literature, its art, its religion. Man did not consciously choose the social and political structure of his society. Rather, the society and its institutions had evolved in



accordance with historical tendencies within that society. Most important, the underlying structure upon which the society rested was invariably the economic system which provided its organizational basis. Thus unlike other social reformers who accounted for the existence of social evils by pointing to a variety of causes, socialists generally saw the root cause of these evils in the existing economic system. This system, by concentrating the principal means of production and distribution into the hands of a small number of capitalists, gave them vast power over the lives of working people.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes those within the ISS who maintained that economic motivation was the sole determinant of men's actions came under attack. Men are not shaped exclusively by their surroundings, John Spargo told the delegates to the second annual ISS convention. It was, moreover, a gross oversimplification to reduce the worldwide socialist movement, which was basically a movement for social justice, to a kind of "economic Calvinism, a gospel of economic predestination." Elsewhere, Spargo claimed that Marx himself had never taught that the economic system alone determined social progress; other factors such as nationality, patriotism, and ideals also played a role. Vida D. Scudder stressed the importance of ethical factors. The economic interpretation of history, she told an ISS summer conference, contained an important kernel of truth, but "it ... does not explain everything." To avoid the twin dangers of utopianism and "cold intellectualism," socialists would have to "create a synthesis of scientific interpretation and spiritual forces."<sup>12</sup>

If economic activity, the way men produced goods and services, determined the institutions of a particular society, the class struggle was the driving force that brought about social change. Socialist faith in the ultimate triumph of socialism was based in part on the nineteenth century idea of progress which received strong support from the Darwinian theory of evolution. Like biological organisms, social organisms were constantly evolving from lower to higher forms. Thus capitalism had evolved from feudalism and was superior to it; once capitalism had fulfilled its historic mission, it would be supplanted by socialism. In the dialectic of history, the ceaseless clash between

contending forces would culminate in the final struggle between capitalist and proletarian and the ultimate victory of the working class. This victory would usher in the cooperative commonwealth which would abolish private ownership in the means of production, end exploitation of man by man, and bring about a condition of unprecedented social harmony.

This chiliastic vision of the perfect society, heralding the end of history, was widely shared by socialists, as was the notion of the class struggle as the engine of social development. But as in all matters of doctrine in the ISS, views on the nature of the class struggle differed decidedly. The class struggle, asserted William English Walling at an ISS convention, existed more within the middle class than between capitalists and workers. And although the socialist movement could not exist without the working class, that movement was essentially a middle-class movement. On another occasion, Walling wrote that students could easily be confused by the “57 varieties” of socialism, and that one of the more confusing terms used by socialists was the concept of the class struggle. At one time the class struggle was a valuable principle, but since Marxian socialists were often using it in a “narrow and dogmatic” sense, it might have to be abandoned “for purely practical reasons.” Correctly understood, added Walling, the class struggle meant nothing more nor less than “equal opportunity for all.”<sup>13</sup>

Louis B. Boudin, able lawyer and Marxist theoretician who frequently lectured under ISS auspices, did not agree with Walling that one could Americanize the class struggle by equating it with the drive for equality of opportunity. The class struggle, he held, was not invented by socialists but was a fact of human history and of nature itself. It was as indisputable as the division between land and sea. Spargo too took it for granted that the class struggle was real, but he professed to see a positive function in its application by the socialists. Socialism did not attack the rich individual, Theodore Roosevelt’s malefactors of great wealth. Roosevelt wrongly blamed social evils on the misdeeds of individuals, on the cruelties of wicked men in positions of power. The socialist, on the other hand, indicted not an individual, but the social system itself. What was worse, by singling out wealthy wrongdoers,

Roosevelt was merely feeding the hatred and envy of the oppressed masses for the possessing classes. In contrast, the socialist attempted to transmute the raw emotions of the class struggle into purposeful political activity. Socialism, Spargo held,

takes the unlearned discontent of the poor and oppressed, and diverts it from the channels of red anarchy into the channels of constitutional and constructive effort.... [Socialism] turns the discontent from the dark channels of violence into ... useful and constructive ways.

Thus the socialist critique of modern society, Spargo declared, “is the great conservative and preservative force in the life of the nation.”<sup>14</sup> Frank Bohn, a lecturer at Columbia University and with Walling one of the few people in the ISS who strongly supported the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), held a contrary view. He told the ISS that “social war” was inevitable and that industrial unionism by transforming the labor movement into one mighty union might hasten the advent of socialism.<sup>15</sup>

ISS college chapters, notably those in the larger universities, often heard the views of nonsocialists on the class struggle and other points of socialist doctrine. For instance, historian Charles A. Beard who was a popular lecturer at meetings of the Columbia and Barnard chapters cautioned that, contrary to Marx’s prediction, socialism might not be the inevitable result of the class struggle. Although he acknowledged that socialism was a possible outcome, he suggested that the ruling class might adopt measures that would increase the dependence of the working class on the state and thus render it harmless. Besides, he questioned if the working class could maintain itself in power once it had gained it on the ground that it might not be capable of ruling.<sup>16</sup>

The class struggle, then, could be explained either as inevitable social war or a benign device for diverting the discontent of the working class from violent action into constructive political activity. As has been shown, the ISS was spacious enough to accommodate both of these explanations as well as others falling somewhere between the extremes.

But if the socialist commonwealth were to be established at some future date, how would it come about? Here again, college students heard divergent interpretations at chapter meetings and conventions or read them in ISS literature. Recall that in his lecture tour for the ISS, Jack London openly talked about class war and revolution in terms that frightened newspaper editors and conjured up visions of bloody civil war. But what had gone unnoticed or been deliberately ignored was London's insistence that in the United States where the workers had the franchise violence would be unnecessary. Confusion arose in part because, at least in the early years, the ISS rarely bothered to explain just what was meant by the term social revolution. In a widely read article addressed to college students, for example, Upton Sinclair explained that he had talked with many truth seekers in all walks of life who had started out in various reform movements but who had then decided they really belonged in "the revolutionary Socialist movement." His message was that of the moralist, and nowhere did he define what he meant by revolutionary socialism, or even how the socialist movement differed from other reform movements.<sup>17</sup>

Hillquit was more precise. The mission of socialism, he told a joint meeting of the Columbia and Barnard chapters, was one of peace, and socialism would come peacefully. The socialist movement aimed at transforming competition into cooperation, ending the age-old conflict between employer and labor, between the races, between countries. Nothing in all history except perhaps the growth of doctrine during the period of early Christianity could be compared to the growth of the modern socialist movement. A few months later, Eugene V. Debs brought the same message to Columbia. Socialism was bound to come, Debs told a packed audience in Columbia's Horace Mann Auditorium. And it would come peacefully, for the socialists "are not endeavoring to foist Socialism on Society, and ... are merely preparing it for its peaceful entrance." Again, Victor Berger, first socialist congressman, coolly predicted at the 1911 ISS convention that England would go socialist "in six or seven years," and that Germany and the United States would follow England.<sup>18</sup>

The fact is that in spite of revolutionary rhetoric indulged in occasionally by such ISS spokesmen as Jack London, George Kirkpatrick, and Frank Bohn, most of those who spoke for the ISS believed that the victory of socialism would be achieved at the polls. Wherever the workers have the vote as in the United States, Jessie Wallace Hughan explained in a book commissioned by the ISS as a text for study chapters, socialists rely on the ballot to bring about peaceful change. She conceded, however, that the ruling class might precipitate violent conflict if, for example, it sought to invalidate the outcome of an election. In an article in the society's bimonthly journal, Miss Hughan implied that violent revolution was out of the question because the goal of socialists—the social ownership of the means of production and distribution—could be realized only as a result of economic development. Since this development would be a long-term process, it would be necessary meanwhile to go through a transition period of unknown duration.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Spargo explained that the social revolution could be considered successful once the means of production and distribution had been transformed into social property. But this, he added, could come about only as a result of a long evolutionary process and not by a sudden uprising or romantic posturings. William English Walling, citing the term “revolutionary evolution” used by Marx, interpreted Marx's phrase to mean that socialists expected the transformation to socialism to come not in a single cataclysmic crisis but as a result of a long series “of revolutionary, political, civil, and industrial conflicts.” And Graham Stokes, whose views carried great weight with the “capitalist” press, told an interviewer for the *New York Times* that he did not advocate violent revolution “at this time, or for the near future,” because he firmly believed that existing social injustices could be remedied without revolution. But he also warned that the continued exaction of “unearned tribute” by “the exploiters of the people” might cause the people to defend themselves, and that this reaction to violence would be fully justified. Finally he believed that the demands of the people for an end to exploitation would persuade the exploiters voluntarily to limit their opportunities until it would become impossible to collect unearned profits.<sup>20</sup>

### III

The social revolution, it was generally agreed, would not come as the result of a sudden uprising, and the cooperative commonwealth would not be established anytime soon. To meliorate the lot of the working class in the here and now, socialists adopted the policy of immediate demands, consisting of a set of political and economic reforms to be enacted into law. There was precedent for this policy, for earlier American followers of Marx had also distinguished between demands for immediate reforms and ultimate objectives which could be realized only in a radically changed society. In fact, the policy of immediate demands went back to Marx himself, who proclaimed in the *Communist Manifesto* that “the Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement.”<sup>21</sup>

Morris Hillquit, one of the best known theoreticians of the Socialist party and a member of the ISS executive committee, explicitly endorsed that policy. The socialist program, he wrote, “is a program of immediate relief, and the socialist demands are made on the present state.” Socialists are concerned solely with the immediate impact of their proposed measures on the well-being of the people; if they speculate at all about the future, they restrict their speculations “to conditions ‘on the day after the revolution.’” In her textbook for college chapters, Jessie W. Hugan explained that deliberate political action embodied in a set of immediate demands would strengthen the working class and build a solid foundation for the long transition period that would precede the socialist state. Miss Hugan’s immediate demands were divided into political and economic demands requiring legislative action. Measures to strengthen political democracy included the initiative and recall, the referendum, and women’s suffrage. Economic demands consisted of the minimum wage, social security, guaranteed employment, and the right to strike; various fiscal measures, such as income and inheritance taxes; and the gradual acquisition of the principal means of production, beginning with public utilities and big trusts. The transfer to social



ownership was to be achieved by “at least partial compensation” in the form of government bonds.<sup>22</sup> Florence Kelley, the energetic secretary of the National Consumers League and for many years a fighter for the improvement in the working conditions of women and children, also stressed the importance to the movement of immediate legislative demands. In the past, she warned a joint meeting of the Columbia and Barnard chapters, too much emphasis on theory and not enough time spent on fighting existing evils had harmed the socialist cause. It was necessary to prove to the working class that socialists were practical men and women and not idealistic dreamers. Her package of immediate demands included legislation regulating the hours of employment of children in home industries, providing pure milk for young children, and improving the working conditions of women. Mrs. Kelley was particularly disturbed about the long working hours of telephone operators and singled out as “morally dangerous” the regulation of the telephone company requiring girls to listen in on all long-distance conversations.<sup>23</sup>

The demand for a greater role by government in correcting social wrongs inevitably raised the question of the role of the state under socialism. Full-blown state socialism, spokes-men for the ISS warned, would be inimical to the interests of the working class. William English Walling, for instance, contrasted “socialism” in wartime Germany with his conception of true socialism. In Germany, the government was running the country for the benefit of a privileged class of junkers, land owners, and industrial capitalists; in the socialized state he envisioned, on the other hand, the people would democratically control the means of production. This led him to conclude that class rule will persist under state socialism, whereas true socialism presupposes a long process of social development, ultimately leading to democratic control.<sup>24</sup> Graham Stokes, president of the ISS, agreed with Walling that state control of a nation’s productive machinery did not necessarily add up to socialism and might in fact be detrimental to the interests of the working class. Recalling the rapid nationalization of industry in all of the belligerent countries at the outbreak of the First World War, Stokes asserted that collectivism was embraced by the ruling classes in order to protect the



interests of the capitalist owners. True collectivism, he held, was possible only under democratic government controlled by all those who labored “by brain or brawn.”<sup>25</sup>

State socialism, then, perpetuated class rule, while democratic control of production and distribution somehow assured true socialism. The distinction was useful if ambiguous, for nobody asked how one might assure social ownership and democratic control of the productive forces without at the same time enormously increasing the power of the state. Granted that society would sooner or later assume greater control over the productive forces, how would these forces come under social control? So far as the giant trusts were concerned, the ISS believed that trust busting aimed at restoring competition—as advocated by progressives—was a romantic dream doomed to frustration. On the contrary, Hillquit declared at Barnard, trusts served a useful purpose because they combined inefficient enterprises into large efficient units. Regulation of trusts, on the other hand, was an “eminently sane” method of dealing with such combinations because regulation would ultimately lead to social ownership. Spargo also opposed breaking up the trusts, but he wanted to skip the regulatory stage altogether and immediately put the trusts and all other holders of social means of production under collective ownership. Victor Berger told Harvard students that his solution to the trust problem was simply to buy out the trusts for the benefit of the public.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the sharpest attacks against socialists were made on the ground that they wished to abolish not only private ownership in the means of production but also personal private property. The ISS rejected the notion that belief in the need for social control of the means of production implied the abolition of all forms of private property. How could this be true, exclaimed George Kirkpatrick at Barnard, when more than half the people in the United States did not yet own their own homes? The Harvard Socialist Club mounted a spirited defense against those opponents of socialism like former Harvard President Charles W. Eliot who maintained that socialists advocated the abolition of private property of any kind. Not so, protested Gerard C. Henderson, president of the club. No reputable socialist had ever advocated the abolition of

private property. While socialists did maintain that social ownership of the means of production was desirable for the sake of efficiency and justice, they held, nonetheless, that personal income should continue to be privately owned and expended by the owner on any necessity or even luxury in any way he wished. And in the Harvard Socialist Tract No. 1, Hiram K. Moderwell argued that far from wishing to restrict the holding of private property for personal needs, socialists vigorously championed a large increase in such property for the masses of people who owned very little.<sup>27</sup>

The ISS suspected that even under socialism some people would own more of the world's goods than others. This presented no problem, for the society favored equality of opportunity, not of outcome. Since people were born free but unequal, spokesmen for the ISS insisted on equality of opportunity so that everybody could achieve in accordance with his abilities. Inherited wealth and social position ought to be abolished as barriers to fair competition between individuals, and the state ought to use its power to see to it that everybody had an equal start. As a step in this direction, Walling argued for a fairer distribution of America's wealth, but he clearly did not advocate equality of income. A fairer distribution would make possible better schools; scholarships for exceptionally talented students, enabling them to obtain a high school education and thereby improving their opportunities for college or university education; better housing and sanitation; and a host of other social benefits.<sup>28</sup>

ISS student leaders rarely participated in ideological debate within the ISS, but they clearly felt comfortable in its ambience. They showed even less taste for revolutionary rhetoric than did those adults who made policy or lectured under ISS auspices. When the president of the Columbia Socialist Society declared that "some day the United States may elect a Socialist president," he expressed a widely shared belief in legitimate political activity that would bring ultimate triumph at the ballot box.<sup>29</sup> Whenever students did take a position on questions of ideology, they generally declared in favor of practical programs rather than abstract speculation. Socialism, wrote Lippmann, should not be treated as a rigid creed whose utility can be proved by abstract

reasoning, in the manner of scholastic philosophers trying to discover the nature of substance. A more profitable way to test the practical value of socialism would be to examine various experiments in public ownership throughout the world, using social well-being as a standard of measurement. "Meet [socialism] as a dialectical process in Karl Marx," declared Lippmann, "and it seems terrible and remote. Meet it in the immediate issues of life, and you will find the true sentiment of the nation behind it." Socialism, argued the disciple of William James, is merely a convenient term "for a collection of social reforms, each of which must be judged in actual experiment by a standard of social welfare." Government ownership of any large-scale industry, Lippmann told the Barnard Socialist Club, could come about only if the people want it and are willing to utilize the democratic process to achieve it slowly and by stages. And at the 1913 convention of the ISS, Lippmann told the delegates that students who had come to believe in the essential truth of socialism should guard against dogmatism and help to adjust the socialist philosophy to the ever-changing political and economic realities of American life.<sup>[30](#)</sup>

Hiram K. Moderwell, Lippmann's successor as president of the Harvard Socialist Club, also stressed the practical program of socialism as against ideological speculation. "Surplus value, the iron law of wages, the class struggle, the social revolution, economic determinism, have no meaning one way or the other, for or against. It is simply a question of misdirected production and misappropriated profits." Socialists observe the facts of poverty and suffering, he concluded, and offer a program of practical remedies. Similarly, when Edwin E. Witte heard Spargo extol the merits of the socialist program of immediate demands before the Wisconsin Socialist Study Club, he noted in his diary that Spargo's position represented his own political convictions at that time.<sup>[31](#)</sup>

Ideological discussion within the ISS was rarely acrimonious. Generally, debate took place in a climate of civility, toleration for opposing views, and mutual respect, at least until the tensions of the First World War engulfed the ISS. The society was always willing to submit its ideas to the test of competition, and it invited contributions

for its periodical not only from sympathizers but also from “earnest and intelligent critics.” Time and again Harry Laidler solicited contributions from well-known public figures, including former President Theodore R. Roosevelt, President Arthur T. Hadley of Yale, President Jacob G. Schurman of Cornell, and ex-President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard. That they regularly declined his invitation surprised but did not discourage him.<sup>32</sup>

A few months before America entered the war, Stokes reiterated the long-held position of the ISS with respect to ideology. “Our correct function,” he instructed Laidler, “is to present impartially for consideration, every well-reasoned interpretation of socialist theory, scrupulously guarding against adopting as our own, any individual’s interpretation of controverted points.”<sup>33</sup> By and large this policy accurately reflected the spirit of the ISS and the temper of its membership; it therefore enjoyed wide acceptance throughout most of the society’s existence. As we shall see, however, when American participation in World War I hung in the balance, some influential ISS members, with Stokes taking the lead, did not hesitate to adopt some rather dubious interpretations of “controverted points” in order to justify their prowar stand.

## Notes

\* For text of constitution, see Appendix A.

\* In 1917 slightly more than 50 percent of the members of the ISS executive committee belonged to the Socialist party. For an analysis of the relationship between the ISS and the Socialist party see Chapter 5.

## 4

### The ISS in Action

The revised ISS constitution of 1914 no longer included high schools among the educational institutions in which study chapters were to be established.\* Yet the original constitution and subsequent revisions through 1910 had encouraged the organization of chapters in high schools and had included students in any institution “above the rank of grammar school” among those eligible for voting membership.

Among the letters received by the ISS soon after the formation of the society was one from a young high school student named Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Then in her second year at Morris High School in New York City’s borough of the Bronx, Miss Flynn wrote that she had “always been a Socialist sympathizer” and inquired politely what she could do to assist the ISS.<sup>1</sup> It is not known whether the ISS accepted her offer, or indeed why Sinclair and his colleagues had ever considered high school students as potential members. In any event, what little evidence there is suggests that the executive committee became increasingly skeptical about the value of efforts in the high schools. Though some socialists did form an Inter-High School Socialist League in New York, this was not an ISS initiative. During the first year, lecturers for the league included Gustavus Myers, Alexander Irvine, John Spargo, Louis B. Boudin, and W. J. Ghent, all of whom also lectured for the ISS from time to time. It would be a mistake, however, to suspect ISS involvement in this instance, for socialists generally were independent thinkers, and none of the individuals named required permission from anyone to lecture anywhere he chose. During George Kirkpatrick’s brief tenure as ISS organizer, he mentioned the league and

invited correspondence from high school students throughout the country. But at about the same time, the executive committee was unable to agree whether or not Kirkpatrick's *Educated Proletariat*, which was to be distributed in college towns, should also be distributed to high school students. Again, when the ISS was invited by a socialist in Hempstead, New York, to supervise an essay contest on socialism among public and private high school students in that town, the executive committee instructed Laidler to decline the invitation. Yet a few years later, the committee seemingly had second thoughts, for it then asked Laidler to encourage and give guidance to high school students who had inquired about the formation of study groups.<sup>2</sup> The point is that the executive committee vacillated in the matter and did not adopt a firm policy for a number of years. Very likely, when the ISS finally eliminated high schools as institutions suitable for organizational work, it tacitly recognized that the return such work could reasonably be expected to yield would not be commensurate with the time and effort expended on it.\*

Governance of the ISS was vested in an executive committee which was elected annually by the entire membership of the society. Consisting of eleven members in the early years, the committee was gradually enlarged to twenty-four members. Starting in 1908 each alumni chapter was entitled to elect one additional member of the committee from among its own membership. Undergraduate chapters, on the other hand, did not gain student representation on the committee until 1914. The executive committee was organized on a functional basis, with various subcommittees doing the spade work. From the beginning, there were subcommittees on finance, lectures, literature, membership, and press relations; additional subcommittees were added as the need arose. Later on, for example, a subcommittee on organization advised the organizer on best methods of establishing college and alumni chapters; and one on women's colleges attempted to perform a similar function with respect to the special problems found in such colleges. Appropriate subcommittees also compiled study courses and reading lists for the use of college chapters and prepared the literature distributed by the ISS.

The nerve center of the ISS was its central office in New York. Headed by the indefatigable Harry Laidler, who took over as organizer and office executive in 1910, the central office provided a wide range of services that grew in number over the years. Indeed, the sheer volume of work performed by Laidler and his small staff consisting of one executive secretary and one stenographer as well as part-time volunteers from the executive committee was truly remarkable. The central office organized or assisted in organizing college and alumni chapters; it provided the chief point of contact with chapters in the field; it secured a growing list of lecturers and scheduled their speaking engagements before college chapters and college classes in economics, sociology, political science, and English; it arranged for the printing and distribution of ISS literature; it organized the annual conventions, summer conferences, dinner meetings, and other special events. Laidler supervised all of these functions and in addition managed somehow to make several trips to colleges and universities in the course of each academic year. From 1913 to 1919, he also edited the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, which was published four times during the academic year; when the journal changed its name to the *Socialist Review*, Laidler again was its editor.

## II

As soon as Laidler took over as organizing secretary of the ISS, he moved to improve communications with chapters. In appointing him to the position, the executive committee had instructed him to concentrate on the preparation and dissemination of appropriate literature and to visit at least some of the eastern colleges as quickly as possible. As Laidler saw it, his immediate task was to make relations with chapters “less nebulous, more definite” than in the past and to define more precisely the conditions of membership. Thus he required chapters to submit regular reports on their activities and furnish the names of their officers and members. Such reports, he felt, would enable him to



revitalize dormant chapters, reorganize defunct chapters, and communicate with former members who had graduated.<sup>3</sup>

College chapters, incidentally, were encouraged but not required to affiliate with the national organization. In fact, chapters sometimes found it expedient not to affiliate, either to circumvent administrative interference or overcome student objections. Organizer George Kirkpatrick complained on one occasion that some students who had formed campus study groups had refused to seek formal ties with the parent organization. He pointedly reminded these students that the ISS had labored long and faithfully in their behalf and would continue to do so. Just the same, such groups ought carefully to consider the “moral influence” the ISS would gain if they decided in favor of affiliation. At about the same time, however, an officer of the ISS enunciated a rather liberal policy with respect to affiliation. The study chapter at Cornell had reported that it did not wish to affiliate with the ISS because not all members of the group were socialists. Moreover, since most of the members were working their way through college, they could not afford to pay the yearly dues of one dollar per member to the general society. W. J. Ghent, who as secretary of the ISS spoke with authority, replied in part:

Our business is primarily to foster the study of Socialism in the colleges. We should prefer that all clubs formed for that purpose be definitely affiliated to our national body. But if for any reason such a club cannot join us, we should still consider it a part of our general movement, and render it what aid we could.<sup>4</sup>

Yet sometimes the ISS felt compelled to make an all-out effort aimed at keeping an influential chapter in the fold. Several years after the Yale chapter had been firmly established, Alexander Trachtenberg, its president, reported at a meeting of the ISS executive committee that Dean Brown and several other faculty members had suddenly opposed his group because they considered it a propaganda organization. To support their charge, they referred to a clause in the ISS constitution, stipulating that a local chapter “may retain one-half of the dues for use

in propaganda.” The chapter was told that if it severed its connection with the national society all opposition to it would cease. The members then voted 42 to 6 to remain with the ISS, whereupon those opposed withdrew. Not certain about the wisdom of their decision which might result in the untimely end of the chapter, the forty-two loyal members had instructed Trachtenberg to seek advice from the executive committee. That body evidently considered this a test case. It agreed unanimously that dis-affiliation of the Yale chapter would have unfortunate consequences inasmuch as it might set a discouraging precedent for other chapters experiencing even the slightest difficulties with their college authorities. Equally bad, if Yale disaffiliated, communication between the chapter and the national office would cease, and the office would then find it difficult to obtain information concerning chapter membership and activities. On the advice of the executive committee, the Yale chapter persisted and retained both its affiliation with the ISS and its position as one of the leading chapters of the society. It should be added that the Yale authorities were in error, for the constitutional clause authorizing local chapters to keep a portion of their dues for use in propaganda clearly applied only to alumni chapters, not to college chapters. But fearing perhaps that retention of this provision might lead to administrative attacks on other chapters, the executive committee, after hearing Trachtenberg, voted promptly to revise the constitution and delete the troublesome clause.<sup>5</sup>

The study of socialism, the ISS never ceased to stress, did not imply a commitment to the socialist movement. Algie M. Simons, an alumnus of the University of Wisconsin and a prominent socialist, doubtless expressed the sentiments of the ISS leadership when he wrote, “I do not urge students to become socialists. I do urge them to know socialism because ... the man who does not know it is a good deal less than half educated.” The ISS, Harry Laidler told an interviewer, was committed to education, not propaganda. One of the most important outcomes of its educational mission, he predicted confidently, was likely to be the lasting influence upon the minds “of our next generation of millionaires” who would be prepared to accept the changes that would follow the “inevitable” victory of socialism. ISS spokesmen were

undoubtedly sincere in denying that the impartial study of socialism signified acceptance of the socialist creed. Yet given their unshakeable belief in the truth of socialism and its ultimate triumph, they would have been less than human had they not expected that serious study would lead to acceptance. Morris Hillquit faced this issue squarely. While it was true that the ISS advocated a thorough study of the philosophy of socialism and did not attempt to make converts, he told the delegates to the second annual convention of the ISS, an intelligent study of socialism had sooner or later led almost all educated men and women to identify with the movement and to become its active proponents.<sup>6</sup> To hasten the process of self-conversion, the ISS provided a variety of printed materials which it believed to be suited to the needs of college students. “How can we win the world?” asked George Kirkpatrick. His answer, “With literature.” John Temple Graves, a student leader at Princeton, had a similar prescription. Discussing ways of overcoming the indifference of Princeton students and their misconceptions concerning the aims of the socialist movement, he suggested that the ISS publish a monthly magazine to further its educational work. “The printing press,” he assured fellow delegates to the 1911 convention, “is the best method to fight this ignorance and indifference.”<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, the ISS had extraordinary faith in the power of the written and spoken word. This faith, coupled with an almost missionary zeal for spreading the message of socialism among college students, found tangible expression in a steady stream of suggested study courses; lists of recommended books and articles; and detailed instructions on how to organize a chapter, guide study meetings, and conduct public lectures. Faith in the power of the printed word also explains why Florence Kelley urged students to persuade local libraries to make available to their readers “every Socialist book” written in English. It explains further why some chapters took the initiative in providing access to books on socialism to a wider audience in their institutions. The Harvard Socialist Club, for example, obtained permission from the Union Library Committee to place its collection of some one hundred books on the history and development of the socialist movement on the “Recent Accessions” shelf of the Harvard Union. Finally, faith in the

power of the socialist message prompted delegates to the very first ISS convention to agree on two propositions: (1) that distribution of literature to students unwilling to attend chapter meetings was at least as important as the study of socialism by the members of the chapter; and (2) that “perhaps the largest task” of chapters was to supply to the ISS the names and addresses of liberal and socialist students and teachers in their own colleges and elsewhere so as to enable the office to mail appropriate literature to these individuals.<sup>8</sup>

### III

Members of college chapters generally agreed with the parent organization that the ISS should not become narrowly partisan. As they saw it, their aim was not to make converts to socialism but to study all aspects of the socialist movement and develop social awareness among their members as well as nonmembers. To this end, chapter meetings were to be wide open to all points of view, and public meetings were to be addressed by socialist, nonsocialist, and even anti-socialist speakers.<sup>\*</sup> This approach, they reasoned, would enable students to reach an intelligent decision as to whether they wished to support or oppose the socialist movement. The president of the Wesleyan Social Study Club, for example, declared that the basic purpose of his club was to provide students interested in “civic affairs” with a forum for the discussion of vital political and social problems. Such a forum, he maintained, would be particularly valuable for the student with strong opinions, for having his arguments challenged by others and having to listen to contrary opinions would make him aware of his own shortcomings.<sup>9</sup>

This approach to the study of socialism generally typified the practice of chapters elsewhere; it was, moreover, wholly consistent with the wishes of the parent organization. As the president of the Clark chapter expressed it concisely, the Clark Socialist Society was “essentially investigatory in character, aiming to study Socialism, discuss Socialism, and even oppose Socialism in order to find out something about it.” The

club specifically welcomed to its meetings and to membership an assortment of types covering the spectrum of political opinion, including “Anarchists, Democrats, Progressives, Prohibitionists and Republicans....” The following year John Henry Lanois, the new chapter president, told the local newspaper that he was not a socialist, but that as a student of social and economic problems he had joined the club to broaden his knowledge of socialism. The reporter was probably relieved to discover that while the Clark Socialist Society had a membership of thirty-two, no more than ten were “real live, hustling exponents of the belief that unearned increment should be sliced up and handed out to the common people.”<sup>10</sup>

Throughout their existence most chapters looked to the ISS for advice and guidance. Harmonious relations between the parent organization and the chapters were essential, Cornell delegate C. H. Williams told an ISS convention. “The Society should advise, direct and inspire and, in their turn, the chapters should respond eagerly and readily....”<sup>11</sup> The ISS, as already noted, was more than willing to serve as mentor and guide and to instruct college chapters in the proper conduct of chapter activities. A good way to conduct a study meeting, the ISS advised college chapters, was to have a member read a short paper or give a talk on some aspect of socialism, to be followed by general discussion. Or if the members preferred, the chairman could ask each participant to give his evaluation of the paper or talk. But whatever method the members adopted, the ISS cautioned them to allow no one to “monopolize” the meeting; to make an effort to stick to the subject; to rule out of order all “personal innuendoes”; and to discourage “mere quibbling.”<sup>12</sup> Local conditions often influenced the choice of topics and the method of study. The activities of the Amherst chapter,<sup>\*</sup> for example, consisted mainly of informal “bull sessions” with other students and faculty, who were at times joined by President Alexander Meiklejohn. There was discussion of contemporary social and economic problems in conjunction with readings of the growing literature. The Yale chapter, on the other hand, chose a more formal approach. By arrangement with the Yale library, books on socialism and other subjects were placed on a reserve shelf, and a list of specific works to be studied that semester was

posted near it. Members were urged to prepare for meetings by reading the material suggested by the discussion leader and at least one of the recommended general works. One semester the chapter used this method to study the political ideas of Rousseau, Marx, and Lassalle; the discussion on Rousseau, the chapter announced proudly, would be led by Professor William Ernest Hocking of Harvard.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps one of the most sophisticated chapters of the ISS was the Wisconsin Socialist Club. As early as 1908, when only a handful of chapters were established and most of them were leading a precarious existence, the club undertook a systematic study of the American labor movement and its struggle for recognition. That semester the club also studied the role of Marx, Engels, and Lassalle in the development of socialism; the economic interpretation of history; and the relation of socialism to social reform.<sup>14</sup> The abiding interest of the Wisconsin chapter in the labor movement and social reform movements generally, stems from a number of sources. In the first place, Wisconsin, with its large German population, had a strong socialist tradition and an influential and well-organized Socialist party, known in Wisconsin as the Social Democratic party. Under the leadership of Victor L. Berger, the party developed cordial relations with the labor movement and campaigned actively for municipal reform of the type referred to by some as “gas and water” socialism. Moreover, the Wisconsin chapter antedated the ISS, and its members had come to know Madison socialists and labor leaders whose political orientation was reformist. Finally, over a period of years, some of the most active members of the Wisconsin chapter, including Helen Sumner, William Leiserson, Edwin E. Witte, David Saposs, and Selig Perlman, had come under the influence of John R. Commons, indeed, some of them later collaborated with Commons on his pioneering *History of Labor in the United States*.

Self-directed study proved difficult at first for some chapters. Freda Kirchwey, secretary of the Barnard chapter and future editor of *The Nation*, complained about a lack of coherence in their work. Although they were following the suggestions in the ISS course of study, the members found nonetheless that they were “laying stress on trifles, arguing in circles, arriving at unheard of conclusions, and wandering off



into all the adjacent fields of knowledge!” Perhaps in the hope of overcoming their confusion, the Barnard chapter petitioned the student council for permission to hold joint meetings with the Columbia chapter. The council voted to permit joint public meetings; it insisted, however, that the Barnard chapter continue to hold its study meetings at the college and that each club maintain its own officers.<sup>15</sup> Like the Barnard Socialist Club the Williams chapter also discovered that without a definite plan, the study of socialism was not very rewarding and that its members were confused and learning little. But unlike the Barnard chapter the Williams club decided to act. It appointed a committee to draw up a study plan which was adopted by the membership. In a paper he presented at the 1912 ISS convention, Walter Hinkle, president of the chapter, gave details of the study course on socialism. They had divided the subject into its theoretical and practical aspects, with the entire course scheduled to be covered in sixteen meetings, eight each semester; an additional meeting each semester was set aside for review and discussion. Two books by John Spargo served as textbooks, and the supplemental reading list consisted of about forty books in the college library, some favorable to socialism and some opposed.<sup>16</sup> A few years later the ISS chapter at the College of the City of New York organized a “scientific course” on socialism. The course, which was open to all students at the college, consisted of twelve lectures and was offered during lunch hour. The CCNY chapter went beyond the Williams plan, however, for it managed to obtain as instructors the services of Professors Overstreet, Hartmann, Woolston, Schapiro, and Dr. Grendon. A reporter for the socialist *New York Call* who attended one of the lectures told his readers that what he saw reminded him of a scene from a medieval university, with the students hiring and disciplining the professors and conducting their own courses.<sup>17</sup>

## IV



ISS chapters were always ready to welcome all applicants for chapter membership.\* Thus the question of how best to reach potential members was often discussed at ISS meetings. In fact the first ISS convention in 1910 produced a lively debate on this subject. At Harvard, declared delegate Walter Lippmann, it was hard work to arouse the interest of the wealthy student who showed little concern for social problems or for ideals. Such students were not necessarily antagonistic, but merely indifferent. In spite of these difficulties, there were many students at Harvard who were searching for activities to enliven college life. Those students, he warned, could easily be frightened off by talk that was too radical or by the approach of the typical propagandist. That would be considered bad taste, and if Harvard detested anything, it was bad taste. "There is a large social consciousness in Harvard," concluded Lippmann, "but we must not outrage it." Henry Flury, a delegate from the University of Pennsylvania, disagreed with Lippmann's approach. "The radical phase of the movement is the most... attractive phase," he asserted. "Once you try to put a cloak of respectability around it you defeat the ends for which you work." Ironically, President Stokes, who chaired the session and who always insisted that the ISS was an organization devoted to study and not propaganda, sided with Flury. Excessive caution, he warned, might lead to an overly conservative approach. In his experience, audiences never objected to radical talk, provided it was logical. Even conservative listeners, he suggested, would not be offended by a radical speech that was also logical, for people were really interested in radical solutions.<sup>18</sup> After much discussion, the delegates agreed that the tactics adopted by each chapter depended on local conditions and on "student psychology." But one method the delegates deemed applicable in all colleges and universities was to demonstrate to liberal-minded students that the study of socialism had special relevance to their studies. Thus the student of history ought to be referred to passages in the literature of socialism dealing with the class struggle; the student of ethics to passages concerned with the economic basis of past and present moral codes; the student of economics to such topics as surplus value, interest, and profit; the student of biology to chapters on "social parasitism"; and the student

of psychology and education to appropriate chapters in Lester F. *Ward's Applied Sociology*, dealing with the intellectual gifts of the working class.<sup>19</sup>

At the following convention, the discussion on tactics was resumed. At issue was the question whether a chapter should frankly acknowledge sponsorship of a socialist speaker or whether it should play down that fact to avoid scaring off the more conservative students. Harvard delegate Julius Kuttner, a friend of Lippmann, explained that in the past when the Harvard chapter billed speakers under the auspices of the club, a lecture often drew fewer than forty students. But sometime later when the chapter hit upon the happy idea of asking four or five faculty members to join the committee sponsoring a talk, thereby giving it an aura of respectability, the meeting then attracted from 450 to 500 students. Benjamin Fox, who represented the University of Pennsylvania, disagreed, remarking that a chapter should always acknowledge sponsorship of any event held under its auspices. Gus Egloff, the delegate from Cornell, went further, expressing disdain for the Harvard approach as “too subtle, too timid, too cowardly....” The Cornell chapter, he declared proudly, had never attempted to hide that it was the sponsor of a particular lecture and that the speaker was to talk about some aspect of socialism. And since the chapter had always attracted large crowds with this approach, he recommended its adoption by other chapters. Upton Sinclair, ever the pragmatist, closed the discussion by suggesting that the students in each institution should choose whatever method was best suited “to the psychology of that institution.”<sup>20</sup> Once again, one notes that the central office made no attempt to dictate to its affiliated chapters or to establish a pattern to be followed by all of them.

Local traditions also influenced how chapters publicized and conducted public meetings. Flamboyant methods employed at “radical” CCNY, for example, were considered unthinkable at conservative Yale. A comparison between the two will illustrate the point. Late in 1915 Scott Nearing, who had been dismissed from the University of Pennsylvania in a celebrated academic freedom case, spoke at CCNY under the auspices of its ISS chapter. The strategy adopted by the

chapter to build campus interest in the lecture anticipated some of the techniques perfected later by modern public relations experts. At first, Nearing's scheduled appearance was kept completely secret. Other student organizations on campus were informed that the Socialist Study Club had booked "a very prominent speaker" for a particular date; if any other club were to be so bold as to schedule a public meeting on that day, the outcome might well prove "disastrous" to that organization. Three weeks before the lecture, large posters appeared throughout the campus bearing only the date of the lecture, followed by several question marks. One week after that cryptic announcement, a second poster gave the same information, adding only the location of the lecture. Finally, one week before the lecture a third set of posters provided full details, including a picture of Nearing reproduced from a painting by two student artists. On the evening of the lecture, reported the chapter secretary, over a thousand people filled every available space in the auditorium and many others had to be turned away.<sup>21</sup>

This approach, while successful at CCNY, would not have worked at Yale; for as Robert W. Dunn, president of the Yale chapter, explained, to be successful at Yale meant one had to shun the sensational, the unusual; one had to be conservative and that meant one had to be tactful. Half seriously, he remarked that when a radical young girl had asked him why they did not throw bombs at Yale, he replied that it simply would not be tactful. And to be tactful at Yale also required that the club arrange its public lectures so that they did not conflict with other college events. Moreover, the chapter always used inexpensive posters which were conservative in make-up. Since the New Haven public was usually invited to their lectures, the club sent press releases to the local papers the day before a scheduled meeting in order to gain maximum impact. If a lecture was particularly pertinent to a course offered at Yale, it was also announced in classrooms on that day. Above all, said Dunn, personal contact always paid off. Thus the members of the chapter's executive committee personally invited everybody they met on the day of the lecture. The chapter never charged admission to its public lectures, which were held in Lampson Lyceum, Yale's second largest auditorium. To cover expenses, however, it usually took a

collection at the end of each meeting. After each lecture the members permitted a period of “heckling,” which usually led to “intense and interesting arguments” with the lecturer. Evidently the chapter’s approach was productive, for attendance at its lectures ranged from 150 to 550, which was the capacity of the auditorium. And although the audience of students, professors, and townspeople was usually reluctant to leave the hall after a lecture, Dunn concluded, “as yet we have not resorted to bombs.”<sup>22</sup>

Whatever the tactical differences between CCNY and Yale, the goal in each case was exactly the same—to attract the largest possible audience to each lecture. It was a goal promoted consistently by the national office and accepted un-questioningly by chapters everywhere. Good speakers, it was widely believed, could attract large audiences, and large audiences of those unfamiliar with socialism were desirable because nonsocialists would be able to get over their fear of listening to a discussion of socialist doctrine. As Morris R. Werner of the Columbia chapter put it, it was more important to have a large audience of nonsocialists listen to a “spectacular talk” than to have a small audience of socialists listen to a more technical lecture on socialism. Additionally, successful public meetings were apt to enhance the prestige of a chapter. As Jay Lovestone reported, at CCNY “the leading members of the faculty, as well as the entire student body” expressed their appreciation of the chapter’s work. Indeed, the penchant for large public meetings was deeply ingrained in the ISS. Perhaps the only challenge to that policy came from Paul H. Douglas. It would be well, remarked the future senator, if chapters were to stop “craving after the spectacular speakers” in order to attract large crowds. It might often be preferable to have three or four serious students listen to a “scientific address” than have an audience of several hundred hear a popular speaker. Chapters, he cautioned, “should beware of the ‘Washington Square attitude.’”<sup>23</sup>

The ISS had always insisted that it was not a propaganda society but rather an organization devoted to a sympathetic study of socialism.<sup>\*</sup> Should the society continue this educational approach, or actively promote socialist doctrine? This question was first raised at the fifth annual convention in 1913. Alfred Jaretzki, then president of the

Harvard Socialist Club, moved to reaffirm the position of the society in favor of chapter autonomy, which led to a discussion of the purpose of the ISS and its chapters. Alexander Trachtenberg strongly defended the generally accepted purpose of study chapters and urged the ISS not to depart from its long-held policy. Paul Kennaday, a former ISS treasurer and then member of its executive committee, challenged Trachtenberg's notion and urged the society to acknowledge frankly that it was in fact a socialist organization. "You wear red now," he noted, referring to the badges worn by the delegates. "You wear your colors at your convention. Why don't you wear them in your colleges?" Trachtenberg remained unconvinced. At Yale the majority of chapter members were not socialists, he retorted, and they would not have joined had the chapter presented itself as a socialist organization. In his opinion, the ISS was not and could not be part of the Socialist party as long as many of its members were nonsocialists, for only convinced socialists belonged in the party. If Kennaday's recommendation were accepted, he warned, many ISS members would surely leave. A fellow delegate from Yale supported Trachtenberg, noting that only five of the fifty chapter members at that university were socialists. Thus the Yale chapter might be faced with a dilemma: if it changed its policy and accepted only socialists, it would have to expel the others and thereby snuff out their interest in the socialist movement; on the other hand, if it remained a chapter for the study of socialism, it would retain all of its present membership and continue to flourish. President Stokes left no doubt where he stood on this issue. Noting that only a few of those who organized the ISS were socialists at the time, he urged that the present policy be continued. At Stokes's suggestion, Jaretzki amended his original motion reaffirming chapter autonomy, making it the sense of the convention that the sole purpose of the ISS was the study of socialism. Since the delegates could not reach consensus, the motion was tabled.<sup>24</sup>

But this issue could not be laid to rest so easily. The following day Walter Hinkle, the Williams delegate, introduced another motion reaffirming the position taken by the founders in 1905 that the ISS was a society for the study of socialism and not in any sense a socialist

organization. Some of the “elders” expressed their support. Mary Sanford, a member of the executive committee, pointedly reminded the delegates that they had to act on this issue because otherwise the public might wonder why they had tabled the previous motion. Florence Kelley, first vice president of the ISS, agreed. In her travels to colleges and universities on behalf of the ISS she had found that the strongest chapters were those where the students had clearly organized for the purpose of study. In some of the colleges, however, she had observed that “the ... chapters act in the spirit of the name and not in the spirit of the object.” That led her to suggest that the ISS might consider changing its name, for how could the society continue to insist that it existed solely for the purpose of studying socialism when its name seemed to suggest that it was in fact a socialist organization. But perhaps fearing the impact on the college chapters of so drastic a step, she quickly added that consideration of a change in name be postponed to some future time. G. G. Mills, the delegate of the Boston alumni chapter, took up Mrs. Kelley’s suggestion and proposed that the name be changed to Intercollegiate Society for the Study of Socialism. It would be meaningless, he maintained, merely to adopt Hinkle’s motion, reaffirming the object of the society to be the study of socialism, for opponents of the ISS would continue to point to its name as proof that it really was a socialist organization. The convention brushed aside Mills’s proposal and adopted Hinkle’s motion, but only after it was amended to read that it was not binding on the entire organization.<sup>25</sup> The compromise probably pleased the great majority of members without offending those few who desired greater freedom of action. The national office, for its part, continued to insist that its policy was correct and in conformance with the purpose of the society’s founders.

## V

Following the lead of the national office, college chapters generally continued to stress that their sole objective was the study of socialism.



At times, however, some student leaders argued in favor of a more activist approach. They feared that endless discussion of theory unrelated to practical concerns might prove harmful. Study chapters, cautioned Gerard C. Henderson of Harvard, could easily degenerate into small groups of intellectuals who would end up repeating stale dogmas and empty slogans. To avoid this outcome, he urged chapters to relate socialism to contemporary social conditions in language that other students could readily understand. Moreover, members of study chapters ought to make an effort to participate actively in college life and, like members of the Harvard chapter, aim to be represented on the editorial staffs of college publications. The study of socialism had become a mere toy for some college socialists, complained S. S. Bobbe, a student leader at Columbia. These students were claiming that they understood socialism instinctively, and while socialists should not become “mere thinking machines,” they certainly should not “think with their feelings.” Winifred Smith, a young English instructor at Vassar and a faculty member of the ISS, warned members of study chapters that they were in imminent danger of becoming like “medieval schoolmen meditating upon Heaven.” Study divorced from real life was futile, and too much theorizing might lead to a “discouraging paralysis” of the will. As an antidote, she recommended that students get involved in helping to solve community problems. At Vassar, she explained, chapter members had cooperated with citizens of Poughkeepsie in starting a public library and a fire company, improving the district school and transforming it into a social center, and securing better roads and sidewalks. And Paul H. Douglas, president of the Columbia chapter, while pleading for the dispassionate study of socialism in order to strip it of the “terrifying mystery” surrounding it, pointedly reminded college socialists that the goal of all thought was action.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most far-reaching plan for student involvement in the socialist and labor movements was proposed by Alexander Trachtenberg in a paper he presented at the 1916 ISS convention. Trachtenberg, one recalls, had consistently supported the official position limiting college chapters to the study of socialism; and as he told the convention, there was still a need for the systematic study of the socialist movement.



While many institutions of higher learning were now offering formal courses on socialism, most of these courses were “purely academic” or taught by persons who had little sympathy for the socialist philosophy. Nevertheless, he believed the time had come to go beyond mere study and undertake practical work. The “convinced socialists” in college chapters, he proposed, could perform educational work of great value in the socialist and labor movements. If students wanted to engage in useful “extension work” in the socialist movement, for example, they could teach in socialist Sunday schools, conduct courses in the social and physical sciences for members of the Socialist party, serve as supervisors for the Young Peoples’ Socialist League, and help to arrange lectures or produce printed materials. But college students, he cautioned, had to approach such work in a spirit of service and humility, for otherwise they would be considered intruders. The labor movement also needed the help of educated people, Trachtenberg continued. Students could gain practical experience by working for unions, serving on strike committees, and designing surveys of social and economic conditions among workers. Students would benefit from such work because they would learn about the ideals and goals of the working class and gain a better understanding of the nature of the class struggle. Most important, the ISS itself would benefit greatly, for active work in the socialist and labor movements would “instill a soul and give meaning to our movement” and produce men and women with firsthand knowledge of these movements.<sup>27</sup>

If Trachtenberg had expected a favorable reaction to his proposal, he was bound to be disappointed. The Amherst delegate disputed Trachtenberg’s contention that the study of socialism was too limited an objective. Colleges, he noted, were constantly under attack for teaching subjects that were “purely academic”; teaching such subjects, he suggested, was precisely the function of colleges and universities. Trachtenberg’s proposal, the delegate from Cornell objected, amounted to a plea to engage in propaganda and that, he maintained, ran counter to the spirit of the ISS. Finally Jay Lovestone, president of the CCNY chapter, told the delegates that college was the best place and the college years were the best time for students to acquire a thorough

understanding of the theory of socialism. There would be time enough after graduation to apply what they had learned.<sup>28</sup> Trachtenberg's plan for involving socialist students in social activism beyond the campus walls may have been partly inspired by a similar proposal advanced by Laidler at an earlier convention. College chapters, Laidler had suggested, might initiate a variety of surveys in the cities and towns housing their institutions, preferably under the supervision of some expert faculty member. He singled out surveys of economic waste under capitalism and of labor conditions in a community.<sup>29</sup> While Laidler's plan was more modest than Trachtenberg's, it too sought to join theory and practice. In any case, it appears that neither of these proposals was acted upon.\*

In time, some student leaders also came to feel that they ought to play a larger role in the affairs of the ISS and, particularly, that students ought to be represented on its executive committee. Recall that the first executive committee elected in 1905 had added Laidler almost as an afterthought, and only because another student had called the committee's attention to the curious fact that a student organization was being launched without a single undergraduate on its policy-making body. Laidler, as we know, became a permanent fixture on the committee after his graduation in 1907, but no undergraduate was elected to take his place. For several years thereafter nobody seemed to mind, possibly because most of the early chapters were utterly dependent on the national office for advice and guidance and chapter members themselves could not conceive of a larger role for students. Early in 1911 Laidler, who had been elected organizer of the ISS the year before, informed the executive committee that questions had been asked about the best way to keep students in touch with the committee's work. It might be to the advantage of the ISS, he suggested, if from one to three undergraduates were to be invited to attend the meetings of the executive committee. Students would contribute some good ideas and, more important, they would come to feel that the ISS "was more vitally" their movement. The executive committee was not yet ready for change, and Laidler's recommendation was tabled.<sup>30</sup>

The following year, however, the executive committee appointed a subcommittee to consider the question of student representation. The subcommittee's report reflected the ambivalent feelings of its members about the advisability of student participation. On the one hand, they believed that student representation would give undergraduates a greater stake in the success of the ISS, provide a lesson in democracy, and induce "promising ... students" to work actively for the ISS after graduation. On the other hand, the subcommittee also considered that the student population was "a floating one and irresponsible financially," and that it would, therefore, be unwise to give them the kind of power that would enable them to "revolutionize the character of the Executive Committee" through joint action of a few willful chapters. Balancing these considerations, the subcommittee recommended that an undergraduate committee be formed and its members be invited to attend meetings of the executive committee, but it left the question of voting privileges to the decision of the full committee. Moreover, to assure broad geographic representation, the subcommittee recommended an elaborate scheme which divided the country into eight regions, with chapters in each region having at least one representative; the New England region would have two, and the Middle Atlantic region, three representatives. The executive committee did not accept the report, but voted instead to add two student members to its membership, to be elected by the undergraduate delegates at each annual convention.<sup>31</sup>

The delay proved temporary, however, for later that year the executive committee reversed itself and created a student council, as originally recommended by its subcommittee. Among the twelve members of the council were Devere Allen of Oberlin, Broadus Mitchell of Johns Hopkins, Hilmar Rauschenbusch of Amherst, Abraham Epstein of the University of Pittsburgh, and Robert W. Dunn of Yale. At a subsequent convention, Devere Allen spoke for those who wanted student members to assume greater responsibility in the ISS. College chapters, he told the delegates, ought to help organize new chapters and strengthen existing chapters; more articles by students ought to be published in the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, the society's

journal; above all, the executive committee ought to seek more frequently the advice of students concerning problems facing the ISS. Laidler welcomed these suggestions and expressed his pleasure that students were eager to enlarge the scope and effectiveness of the society. For its part, the executive committee finally seemed prepared to give student members a still greater voice in decision-making. Late in 1916 it approved a request for sectional student conferences to be held in New England in the spring of 1917.<sup>32</sup> About three months later the United States was at war and the scheduled conferences were cancelled.

## VI

As a rule, the best organized and most active ISS chapters were those in the liberal arts colleges of prestigious private universities, with the exception perhaps of the groups at such well-known public institutions as CCNY and Wisconsin.<sup>33</sup> (Exposure to the liberal arts tradition, and the values it promoted, seemingly motivated a small but influential group of students in many of those institutions to join the ISS and participate in political protest. The same pattern would obtain in the radical thirties and sixties.) It proved difficult, however, to sustain chapter activity in professional schools, because students in these schools were generally preoccupied with attaining career goals and showed little interest in the work of the ISS. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for instance, some students did organize a chapter, but it made little progress. Donald Belcher, a chapter member, castigated M.I.T. and the careerism of its students in phrases that have a startlingly modern ring; students in the radical sixties would repeat them almost verbatim and, indeed, extend them to include all institutions of higher education. M.I.T., Belcher charged, “is the handmaiden of industry; its business is to provide men capable of superintending industrial operations....” M.I.T. students and graduates were inclined “to support the industrial fabric, keep wealth centered in the hands that now encircle it, and last, but not least, amass [their] personal quota.”

The average M.I.T. student was “supremely content” with his lot, conscious that power and position may be his some day. It was thus extremely difficult to reach these “alert, hard-working, but almost visionless men... Finally, he deplored the “union between industry and university” as unhealthy, for it prevented the university from purifying industry and making it “wholesome and rational...”<sup>34</sup> Seemingly, interest in socialism was also low at John Marshall Law School in Chicago where the chapter had only nine members. Besides, reported chapter secretary John C. Teevan, as evening students they were hard-pressed for time and unable to hold regular meetings or mount other activities. Their sole aim was to keep the chapter alive from year to year “for whatever moral value its existence may have.”<sup>35</sup>

There were several other professional schools among the over seventy ISS chapters in existence in 1916. Chapters existed, for example, at the American School of Osteopathy, Kirksville, Missouri, and the New York Medical College, and at several theological seminaries, including Union Theological Seminary in New York and Meadville Theological Seminary, Meadville, Pennsylvania. For reasons to be examined in the next chapter, Christian ministers were strongly attracted to socialist teachings; hence theological seminaries provided fertile soil for ISS influence and our earlier statement about the general lack of interest in the work of the ISS at professional schools does not apply to them. Nonetheless, except for occasional references in ISS publications to chapter activities at theological seminaries and other professional schools, little else is known about them. Much more is known about the New York Dental College, one of the most interesting chapters at a professional school, where interest in socialism was also pronounced. Starting in January 1912 and for more than two years thereafter, this chapter published a monthly, *The Progressive Dentist*. An editorial in the first issue announced that the magazine would bring to its readers, both dental students and practitioners, new and progressive ideas that were emerging in their profession; acquaint them with social and political issues affecting the practice of dentistry; and fight commercialism in the dental profession.<sup>36</sup> The journal was in fact a fascinating blend of socialist propaganda and news of professional

interest to the dental student and practicing dentist. Each issue also carried several pages of paid advertising for dental equipment and supplies. And the articles contributed by practitioners acquainted readers with new methods of treatment and new or improved dental materials and equipment.

Unlike college chapters, alumni chapters served a dual purpose: to provide an opportunity for college graduates and former members of college chapters to continue the study of socialism and, additionally, to translate the knowledge gained into social action. Evans Clark, who had been president of the Amherst chapter as an undergraduate, explained the uses of an alumni chapter after he had joined the New York chapter. An alumni chapter, he claimed, fulfilled the human need for friendship, especially important for those “branded as radicals” when they came out of college. Moreover, an alumni chapter was an educational force where college graduates had an opportunity to meet and talk with people active in the socialist and labor movements. Most important, the alumni chapter served as a forum for social action. It should be the rallying point

for raising funds for strikers, for securing publicity for some battle of labor, for exposing some crying industrial abuse, for presenting expert testimony before some legislative investigating committee, for a thousand and one skirmishes in the battle on things as they are.

In short, he concluded, an alumni chapter “can be an incubator to hatch out plots in the struggle for human emancipation.”<sup>37</sup>

Several years earlier Walter Lippmann had suggested that alumni chapters could do useful research work for the socialist movement and assist in raising the level of socialist literature in the United States to that of the European countries.<sup>38</sup> What Lippmann probably had in mind was the work of the English Fabians whose educational work he greatly admired. Some years later the ISS did establish a research bureau, which produced a series of studies modeled after the work of the Fabians. Its first director was Ordway Tead, Evans Clark’s successor as president of the Amherst chapter. The first alumni chapter was



organized in New York early in 1908 for the purpose of providing a center for socialist thought and activities for college men and women residing in the New York area. It was soon joined by a second chapter in Washington, D.C.,<sup>\*</sup> and within a few years seventeen alumni chapters were in existence. By far the most important and active of these was the New York chapter. During its first years it held monthly meetings at the Rand School of Social Science and at the homes of various members. Chapter members had the opportunity to hear Gustavus Myers lecture on the history of some great American fortunes; Charles A. Beard on the economic interpretation of the federal Constitution; John Spargo on the issues of the presidential campaign; and William English Walling on the revolutionary trend of the socialist movement. The president of the chapter during its first few years was René E. Hoguet, a Harvard graduate and son of a prominent New York banker.<sup>39</sup>

The New York chapter conducted well-organized study courses, and noted authorities often addressed individual sessions. The course for 1913–14, for instance, consisted of twelve sessions dealing with various aspects of the socialist movement. Among others, James Harvey Robinson spoke on education and socialism, Walter Lippmann on Fabianism and socialism, and James T. Shotwell on science and socialism. In addition the New York chapter provided unpaid speakers for various community groups. During a one-year period when the chapter had 250 members, its lecture committee arranged for nearly one hundred lectures by chapter members before churches, Socialist party locals, labor organizations, and civic groups; the legal committee collected and published information on the legal status of labor; and the teachers' committee gathered data on various phases of education.<sup>40</sup>

Like Lippmann, President Stokes also stressed the research function of alumni chapters. Such groups, he proposed on behalf of the committee on alumni chapters, should examine industrial conditions, public services, and labor laws. If a city was revising its charter or a state its constitution, an alumni chapter could draft a model charter or state constitution. Finally, alumni groups could propose ways in which a city could “unburden itself” of accumulated special privileges in such areas as the tax structure, education, housing, city planning, and public



utilities. He suggested a systematic approach to these problems and added his customary caveat that all such activities remain “educational, rather than narrowly propagandistic.”<sup>41</sup>

## VII

The ISS published membership lists periodically, but these listed only alumni and at-large members. To obtain accurate data on college chapter membership, Laidler constantly exhorted chapter secretaries to submit regular reports and complete survey blanks for the annual convention. The problem was that, as in most student organizations, membership fluctuated widely; even active chapters, moreover, neglected at times to report to the national office. It appears, however, that in the period from 1911 to 1915, undergraduate membership grew from 750 to 1,332. In 1915 the ISS also claimed nearly 740 alumni members and about 125 at-large members, thus adding up to a dues-paying membership of nearly 2,200 in that year—probably a high-water mark in ISS membership. At the 1915 annual convention, Laidler reported that roughly 55 percent of the members of those undergraduate chapters supplying data were nonsocialists; almost all the rest were socialists. “Only a handful of anti-socialists appear to be members.”<sup>42</sup> Perhaps a better indicator of ISS influence than mere membership data is the rapid increase in the number of college chapters after 1910. Before that year, while the ISS was struggling for survival, there were never more than a dozen chapters. But as shown in [table 1](#), from 1910 to 1916 the number of campus chapters grew from 15 to 71, a not inconsiderable achievement, given the vast expanse of the country and the meager financial resources of the ISS.

[Table 1](#) ISS College and Alumni Chapters, 1910-18

<i>Year</i>	<i>College Chapters</i>	<i>Alumni Chapters</i>
1910	15	2

<i>Year</i>	<i>College Chapters</i>	<i>Alumni Chapters</i>
1911	32	3
1912	45	6
1913	62	12
1914	56	12
1915	70	12
1916	71	15
1917	59	17
1918	39	12

*Sources:* For 1910-12, Oct.-Nov. issues of *ISS Bulletin* for each year; for 1913-14 and 1916, Oct.-Nov. issues of *Intercollegiate Socialist* for each year; for 1915 and 1917-18, Apr.-May issues of *Intercollegiate Socialist* for each year.

By 1915 a respectable number of chapters were active in every section of the country except the South and Far West. As [table 2](#) shows, most of the chapters were in the midwestern states, but those in the New England and Middle Atlantic regions were far more influential in the ISS, except for the chapter at the University of Wisconsin. As noted on several occasions, this chapter was in a class by itself and could easily stand comparison with any of the eastern chapters.

[Table 2](#) ISS College Chapters by Region, 1915

<i>Region</i>	<i>No. of Chapters</i>
New England	14
Middle Atlantic	14
South	4
Middle West	32
Far West	6

*Source:* Report to Seventh Annual Convention, Dec. 1915, ISSP.

The impact of ISS chapters on the intellectual life of their institutions was entirely out of proportion to the number of their members, nor can it be adequately measured by the total number of chapters or their

geographic distribution. Shortly after his graduation from Harvard in 1913, Harold E. Stearns, by no means an uncritical admirer of the Harvard Socialist Club, wrote that the club was “a most potent influence for good. It was practically the only place at Harvard where contemporary politics was discussed seriously.”<sup>43</sup> Through its organizers and lecturers, moreover, the ISS reached large numbers of students at colleges and universities throughout most sections of the country. The society was not exaggerating when it reported in 1915 that its speakers were now assured of a cordial welcome in institutions of higher learning everywhere and that they no longer had to “go in at the back door” of these institutions. In a six-week period in the winter of 1915, for example, John Spargo visited 25 colleges and universities and spoke before approximately 8,000 students and 7,000 townspeople. In the same year, the tireless Harry Laidler spoke in 59 institutions of higher learning before 66 classes in economics, sociology, and English, and “at 13 chapel exercises....” Laidler reported that altogether he addressed from 12,000 to 13,000 students and faculty members. Among other ISS speakers that year were Scott Nearing, Morris Hillquit, Florence Kelley, Ordway Tead, William English Walling, Vida D. Scudder, Hamilton Holt, Bouck White, and Rose Pastor Stokes. Three of these speakers, namely, Laidler, Spargo, and Mrs. Stokes, visited a total of 113 colleges and universities, spoke before 22 college assemblies, and addressed a total of 30,000 students.<sup>44</sup>

In appealing to the idealism of college students, the ISS attracted a remarkable number of gifted young men and women. Almost without exception, asserted John Spargo, the students most interested in our work “represented the very flower of the college or university with which they were connected.” At Yale, members of the ISS chapter told him proudly that if the Yale faculty were asked to draw up a list of the best students, that list would be practically identical with the chapter’s membership roster. And this, Spargo reported, was the case at all of the institutions he had visited.<sup>45</sup> Was Spargo overstating his case? Perhaps, but not by much. For it is indisputable that a great many members of ISS college chapters excelled in their studies while in college and then went on to distinguished careers in the professions they entered. A

partial listing of ISS student leaders includes Walter R. Agard, James W. Alexander, Devere Allen, Carroll Binder, Julius S. Bixler, Bruce Bliven, Paul F. Brissenden, Evans Clark, Babette Deutsch, Paul H. Douglas, Gustav Egloff, Abraham Epstein, Harold Underwood Faulkner, Osmond K. Fraenkel, Nicholas Kelley, Freda Kirchwey, William L. Leiserson, Walter Lippmann, Jay Lovestone, Isador Lubin, Kenneth Macgowan, Hiram K. Moderwell, Leland Olds, Selig Perlman, David J. Saposs, Laurence Seelye, Ordway Tead, Alexander Trachtenberg, Selman A. Waksman, and Edwin E. Witte.

It has not been possible to obtain accurate data concerning the socioeconomic background of chapter members because occupational and other indices that might shed light on the social class of their fathers proved inaccessible. It is nonetheless likely that, except as noted below, those who joined ISS chapters shared a common social background with the general student population. College attendance circa 1910 was still the privilege of a small elite; slightly over 5 percent of the 18–21 year old age group was then enrolled. Early in the century, notes Laurence R. Veysey, the student population was “remarkably homogeneous: a parade of Anglo-Saxon names and pale, freshly scrubbed faces.” In addition, most of these students were largely middle class in social origin.<sup>46</sup> Not surprisingly, therefore, Anglo-Saxon names predominated on almost any roster of ISS chapter members.<sup>\*</sup> This was the case even at Columbia, which was attracting a considerable number of Jewish students in those days, but one does find a large proportion of Jewish names among the members of the Barnard chapter. At the University of Wisconsin, the chapter had a number of Jewish students among its officers, but one also comes across many German names, reflecting the large German population of the state at the time. Except for Trachtenberg, the membership at Yale was largely Anglo-Saxon. The College of the City of New York presented a special case. Its student population was heavily Jewish, and many of those who joined the CCNY chapter had absorbed the socialist heritage of their East European parents. But even at CCNY one comes across some Anglo-Saxon and German names—a useful reminder of the role played by

CCNY in providing a free college education to earlier groups of New York's citizens.

## VIII

The annual budget of the ISS was extremely modest, even in the society's most vigorous period of growth. Indeed it is remarkable that the ISS was able to accomplish as much as it did with the rather limited resources at its command. By 1915 chapters had been organized in 70 colleges and universities, including some of the most prestigious private and public institutions—that is to say, in slightly over 7 percent of the roughly 950 institutions of higher learning then in existence. The South proved resistant, and the midwestern states and those in the Far West could not be visited regularly because of distance and expense of travel. It is likely that even more chapters would have been organized had the ISS been financially able to cultivate those states more intensively. Neither the officers nor the members of the executive committee drew any salary, except for Harry Laidler, the full-time organizer and office executive. On the contrary, some of the well-to-do members of the committee were called upon constantly to contribute money in addition to their services. Among the most generous contributors were Graham Stokes, the wealthy president of the ISS, and his sister Helen Phelps Stokes. During the early years when the young organization was struggling for survival and an infusion of money was needed desperately, or Sinclair had come up with an idea for a new circular, he simply asked Stokes to contribute “\$100 or so....” Others who contributed regularly were George Strobell, a comfortable manufacturer of jewelry; Mary R. Sanford, a long-time member of the executive committee; and Rufus W. Weeks, a vice president and actuary of the New York Life Insurance Company.<sup>47</sup> Miss Sanford, incidentally, was also adept at loosening the purse strings of potential donors and often signed appeals on behalf of the society's finance committee. Although she was after large contributions, smaller donations were always

welcome. Responding to one appeal, for example, journalist Ray Stannard Baker and novelist William Dean Howells contributed \$10 each, and political scientist Luther H. Gulick \$2.<sup>48</sup>

Student members generally had only the haziest notion as to how the ISS was financing its activities. When the subject came up at the annual convention of 1912, several delegates ventured the thought that their dues were sufficient to cover all expenses. They were surprised to learn that all dues collected, including dues paid by alumni and at-large members, paid but a fraction of the society's expenses, and that the major burden was carried by members of the executive committee and other large contributors.<sup>49</sup> As shown in [table 3](#), in the 1916–17 fiscal year—when income was the largest ever—special contributions were \$8,578, whereas dues accounted for only \$1,227 of total income, a ratio of almost 7 to 1. Looked at another way, dues accounted for slightly under 12 percent of income, special contributions for nearly 82 percent, and all other items of income were approximately 6 percent.

[Table 3](#) ISS Financial Report for Fiscal 1916-17

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<i>Receipts</i>	
Dues	\$ 1,226.50
Special contributions	8,577.62
Literature	305.49
Intercollegiate Socialist	193.68
Profits on meetings, etc.	154.26
Miscellaneous	<u>18.82</u>
	\$10,476.37
Balance from last year	<u>255.58</u>
	\$10,731.95
<i>Expenditures</i>	
Rent	\$ 600.00
Telephone	97.56
Printing	755.20

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<i>Receipts</i>	
Postage, express and telegrams	633.34
Literature	209.60
Salaries	4,120.81
Organizers in field	2,111.48
Office supplies	203.30
Intercollegiate Socialist	910.39
Expenses of meetings, etc.	302.06
Miscellaneous	<u>97.97</u>
	<u>\$10,041.71</u>

*Source: Intercollegiate Socialist 5 (Apr.-May 1917), sec. 1, p. 35.*

ISS lecturers generally received no compensation, and most even paid their own travel expenses. Certainly this was true of most members of the executive committee, with the exception of Laidler who, as the society's organizer, received travel expenses. Although he was not a man of means, John Spargo, one of the busiest lecturers for the ISS, was nonetheless in a position to speak at colleges and universities in most parts of the country, largely through the financial support of Caroline Rand, whose money helped found the Rand School of Social Science. George D. Herron, with money supplied by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Rand, had established the Fellowship of the Socialist Spirit, a group of eight or nine socialists with a Christian spirit and orientation. Years later Spargo recalled that he received \$120 a month, which enabled him to work free from economic worry.<sup>50</sup> Thus the ISS had the services, free of charge, of a gifted speaker and writer.

The ISS was also fortunate in its choice of a printer for its various communications. Many of his bills remained unpaid for months, and there were constant appeals for funds to wipe out the deficit.<sup>51</sup> But in spite of all financial difficulties, from 1910 to 1916 the income of the ISS jumped from \$2,400 to \$10,700. It was not lack of money that caused a reversal of its fortunes after the United States entered the Great War. One way or another, the ISS probably would have managed to continue to attract sufficient funds to finance its growing but still



modest needs. But the vicissitudes of war and the hysteria it left in its wake were to prove obstacles too great to surmount.

## Notes

\* See constitution, Appendix A.

\* Late in 1913 word reached the ISS that some students at Fresno Junior College wished to organize a chapter and affiliate with the ISS. The executive committee authorized Laidler to inform the students that they would be granted a charter on condition that only students from the upper class be admitted to membership in the chapter. It was perhaps the only instance of a junior college being considered for membership, but nothing seems to have come of it. MEC, Dec. 18, 1913 and Jan. 12, 1914, ISSP.

\* College chapters earnestly attempted but generally failed to attract speakers opposed to socialism. Chapters in the smaller colleges found it especially difficult to obtain such speakers, and they often voiced their disappointment. Thus Ammon C. Hennacy, chapter secretary at Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio, reported that his group had tried “repeatedly” but unsuccessfully “to get some anti-Socialist Speaker or even a Reformer.” See *IS* 2 (Apr.-May 1914), 27.

\* According to Laidler, the leadership of the Amherst chapter came mainly from Alpha Delta Phi, an exclusive college fraternity, and the chapter was referred to as the home of “egg heads” by its critics in the campus fraternities. See “Notes on ISS,” HLP.

\* The following invitation extended by the Barnard chapter is typical of the attitude of most chapters: “If you do not believe in Socialism, come and argue with us. If you do, come and work constructively with us.” *Barnard Bulletin*, Oct. 11, 1915, p. 5.

\* “It is none of our business to conduct Socialist propaganda,” John Spargo advised the delegates to the second annual ISS convention in 1910. “It is our right to ask that the college permit and encourage a fair and honest study of Socialism.” *NYC*, Feb. 5, 1911, mag. sec., p. 13.

\* Actually, the relationship between the ISS and the American labor movement was both more complex and positive than suggested here. See Chapter 5.

\* One of the founders of the Washington, D.C. alumni chapter was William Macon Coleman, Dean of the College of Law, Intercontinental University; its first president was Captain W.E.A. French, U.S. Army. Press Release, Oct. 1910, ISSP.

\* Although Harvard was admitting an increasing number of Jewish students early in the century, the late Harry A. Wolfson, Nathan Littauer Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy and a member of the Harvard Socialist Club before his graduation in 1912, confirmed that the leadership of the club, except for Lippmann, was largely “Yankee.” Interview with Harry A. Wolfson, Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, July 18, 1973.

## 5

### The Quest for Allies

Shortly after the ISS had been organized, the young society heard from Carl Sandburg, writing from Galesburg, Illinois. Sandburg, a former organizer for the Social Democratic party, requested full information about the ISS, “including the procedure necessary for organizing a local branch.” The future poet’s implied offer to assist in organizing a “local branch” of the ISS betrayed a fundamental misconception of the role envisioned for the society by its founders. Sandburg might perhaps be forgiven for drawing a wrong inference; as an experienced party organizer, he simply assumed that the structure of the ISS would parallel that of the Socialist party. If Sandburg was merely innocent, however, Jack London’s prediction concerning the future relationship between the ISS and the Socialist party was wildly improbable. For the society’s first president was supremely confident that ISS study chapters would eventually be swallowed up by the Socialist party. London’s friend, Frederick I. Bamford, had doubted the wisdom of having convinced socialists form study chapters, whose membership would consist largely of nonsocialists, perhaps even antisocialists. “It is my firm belief,” London replied to his friend early in 1906, “that the groups of the I.S.S.... will be captured by the Socialists and will themselves ultimately make of the I.S.S. a Socialist organization.” Even though one or two socialist students might organize, a chapter consisting largely of serious nonsocialists or students leaning toward socialism, London did not doubt “that the majority of the members will be hammered into Socialism, and a small minority hammered out of the group.” Meanwhile, he reminded

Bamford, “discussion takes place, reading is done, and the word ‘Socialism’ becomes a less misunderstood term in such a college.”<sup>1</sup>

While London was certainly correct in suggesting that study and discussion would foster a better understanding of socialism in the colleges, he was mistaken in predicting that the ISS would sooner or later be taken over by the Socialist party. The fact is that neither the ISS executive committee nor the college chapters themselves had the slightest intention of permitting the society to be “captured” by the party. And the Socialist party, one might add, showed no desire to annex the ISS.\* Moreover, when the ISS was still young, Secretary Ghent enunciated a policy that clearly ruled out competition with the party. “We do not want to cut into any other Socialist movement,” he replied to a man from South Bend, Indiana, who had inquired whether he should help the Chicago socialists or the ISS. “We are merely trying to cover a field not occupied by any others.” This is not to suggest, however, that the ISS wished to remain totally aloof from the party or go it alone. On the contrary, the society considered itself part of the larger socialist movement and welcomed assistance from party members. Indeed, George R. Kirkpatrick, the society’s first full-time organizer who had previously served as a Socialist party organizer, exhorted the party to assist the ISS. In an appeal to the party’s national executive committee and the various state committees, he urged these bodies to consider the ISS “as an agency ... for the important work of carrying the Socialist movement into the colleges.” Because of pressures from “capitalist supporters” of the colleges on college presidents and similar pressures from many presidents on teachers, students were finding it exceedingly difficult to learn the truth about “the great international movement for industrial democracy.”<sup>2</sup>

Cooperation between the ISS and local Socialist party groups took various forms. During the early years, especially, when few college chapters were in existence, the ISS executive committee urged party locals in college towns to supply the names of interested students who might assist in starting study chapters. Contacts in party locals were also sounded out as to the wisdom of organizing a chapter at a particular institution. A socialist lecturer visiting party branches might be asked to

take time out in order to acquaint college students in nearby colleges with ISS plans and supply them with literature. Finally, state and local party secretaries were urged to publicize their public meetings and lectures for the benefit of students who might wish to attend. In return for such favors, the ISS executive committee authorized Laidler to put the society's membership list at the disposal of socialist organizations requesting it. To guard the society's organizational integrity, however, the committee stipulated that no applicant be permitted to copy the ISS list outside the office; that copying it in the office be left to Laidler's discretion; that the ISS card catalog "in no case" be allowed to leave the office; and that Laidler withhold the names of friends of the ISS who were not members. The ISS, incidentally, also had access to various mailing lists, including those of Socialist party local 1, the Child Welfare Committee, the Ethical Social League, the Insurgents Club, the Woman Suffrage Club, "Radical teachers," and the New York Chapter of the Association for Labor Legislation.<sup>3</sup>

Occasionally, some members of college chapters did attempt to form closer ties with local party organizations. At the University of Wisconsin, socialist students, in a novel application of the Wisconsin Idea, performed legislative research for socialist members of the state legislature; and the legislators, reported the students, expressed warm appreciation of their efforts.<sup>4</sup> When Mary R. Sanford and Helen Phelps Stokes, both members of the executive committee, visited Vassar, they discovered that some chapter members had joined the Socialist party local. Miss Sanford reported to the committee that she considered this "unwise and unnecessary"; the students' ties with the party, moreover, might hinder rather than promote the work at Vassar. George Kirkpatrick, on the other hand, took a more sanguine view of the matter. The Poughkeepsie local, he reported, had expressed high praise for the Vassar students and the beneficial influence exerted by them.<sup>5</sup>

Aware of the consequences of adverse publicity, the ISS made a conscious effort to avoid any possible identification with the Socialist party. When there was talk of organizing an ISS chapter at the socialist Rand School of Social Science, for instance, the executive committee vetoed the plan. The chief purpose of the ISS, the committee reasoned,

was to provide an opportunity for college students to learn about socialism. And since Rand School students had every opportunity to learn about socialism without ISS assistance, there was obviously no need for a chapter at that school. Although the logic was impeccable, one suspects that the committee was not unmindful that granting a charter to an avowedly socialist school might prove harmful to the society. Perhaps for similar reasons the ISS refused a request of the Boston Fabian Society to be admitted as a chapter of the ISS.<sup>6</sup> Still, at times the ISS carried its cherished policy of independence from the Socialist party to rather strange extremes. At an ISS conference, after several speakers had discussed rising unemployment, Mary W. Ovington, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), asked the delegates what the socialist members of the ISS could do to persuade the party to take some kind of action. After more discussion, Miss Ovington suggested that it might be appropriate for the delegates to make a formal representation to the party. John Spargo disagreed. It would be dangerous for the ISS to start passing resolutions “advising the Socialist party ... upon questions of policy, or memorializing it upon any subject whatever.” More would be accomplished, he believed, if some ISS member who specialized in the subject of unemployment were to arrange to have the ISS central office send an appropriate article to a select group of socialist papers. Almost all other socialist papers would surely copy it, he suggested, and its author would thus be addressing nearly the entire party membership, rather than the national committee or a party convention.<sup>7</sup>

Although the ISS did not encourage undergraduate members to join the Socialist party, it naturally expected at least some of them to join after graduation. And as one might expect, the ISS leadership took a hopeful view of the role of the intellectual in the socialist movement. Socialism was primarily a movement of the working class, John Spargo declared, but college-trained men and women could make a significant contribution to the movement by bringing to it their idealism and their trained minds. But they must approach the movement in a spirit of humility, he cautioned, and be prepared to accept criticism, an

experience shared by every member of the Socialist party. Leaders would emerge from selfless individuals who were motivated by noble ideals, irrespective of their formal education. Morris Hillquit also insisted that the socialist movement was basically a proletarian movement, since its appeal was directed chiefly to working people. But college-trained men and women were needed to fight against “the purchasable intellects which capitalism has made its own.” College students, he warned, should resist the temptation to convert socialism into an “esthetic treat,” a tendency to which college men were peculiarly susceptible. While college men were not stepchildren in the socialist movement, they must realize that no lasting change could ever be accomplished without the good will of the people.<sup>8</sup> Graham Stokes, president of the ISS, noted that the socialist movement had produced a number of outstanding leaders, but he agreed with Hillquit that leaders were not as important to the success of socialism as the people themselves. If the people wanted to achieve real democracy, he told an interviewer, they would have to become self-reliant and not depend on leaders to solve their problems. Elizabeth Dutcher, another member of the ISS executive committee, stressed the obligation of college-trained people to help others in need. “The college bred person has the spirit of fair play,” she asserted, and the socialist movement “needs his spirit of fair play, his tolerance!”<sup>9</sup>

What is noteworthy in these pronouncements by responsible ISS spokesmen is the conscious avoidance of an elitist orientation. The ISS leadership was, of course, perfectly aware that a college education was a privilege enjoyed by only a small minority of the American people. They also expected, as did other educated Americans, that college graduates would be moving increasingly into positions of leadership in government, industry, and the professions. Yet the ISS remained convinced that a college education did not automatically confer upon its possessor the right to leadership in the socialist movement, a movement based primarily upon working people. Instead, men and women who had benefited from a college education had the clear obligation to help those struggling for existence. Not surprisingly, ISS leaders did not consider the possibility that the college-trained person might be in a

position to contribute systematic, theoretical knowledge to the socialist movement. They ignored that option for the simple reason that ideological speculation was neither the society's strong point nor its major concern.

## II

Christian socialists felt drawn to the ISS as by a magnet. Recall, for example, that George H. Strobell had assisted Upton Sinclair in organizing the society and that Rufus W. Weeks had supported it loyally with timely financial contributions. Both were active Christian socialists. The coming socialist state, Christian socialists believed, would be a just state, the realization of the kingdom of God on earth. As George H. Strobell put it:

*For the first time in the history of the world there is an intelligent and systematic movement toward the conscious organization of a just society. It is the Socialist movement, now on its way to a speedy triumph in all civilized nations.*[10](#)

The future, theologian Walter Rauschenbusch believed, did not belong to those who chose either Christianity or socialism, but to those who could bring about the most complete union between these two forces, “the oldest and the youngest of the idealistic forces at work in our civilization.” Before an ISS audience Rauschenbusch explained the powerful appeal of socialism to the Christian, an appeal he found “irresistible.” Both the socialist and the Christian shared a concern for the downtrodden and the beaten. But while Christian charity usually helped only individuals, socialism extended its charity to entire social groups in need of salvation, such as neglected children and working women who toiled long hours, thereby disrupting family life. It was the historic mission of Christianity to uncover sin and to redeem mankind. The socialist movement had revealed grave injustices in our society, and



“nothing will give a Christian man so much new insight into the damning nature of sin as to combine the Christian with the Socialist comprehension of the evil in human society.”<sup>11</sup> Vida D. Scudder, a member of the ISS executive committee, shared Rauschenbusch’s concern about uncovering sin. Recognizing that human beings were often selfish, Miss Scudder and like-minded Christians embraced socialism as an ethical ideal in the conviction that human nature could be gradually changed so as to eliminate all inborn selfishness. While accepting the primacy of economic forces, she often cautioned against an undue emphasis upon such forces while ignoring “eternities.” What was needed, she told an ISS conference, was a fusion of socialism and Christianity. Elsewhere Miss Scudder proposed “to blend a little mysticism with our economic determinism; the mixture is very satisfactory.” Besides, might not these “automatic forces ... themselves be messengers, fulfilling a central Will?” If they were, then the class struggle might well be “the trumpet-blast of an angel of God.”<sup>12</sup> W. B. Spofford, delegate of the Berkeley Divinity School to an ISS convention, agreed with Miss Scudder that the ethics of socialism were closely related to the ideals of Christianity. To strengthen the bond between them, he recommended “a union of religious and social passion,” which would benefit both the church and the socialist movement.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout its history the ISS had the services of a number of ministers and theologians who frequently addressed college chapters as well as ISS conventions and conferences.\* Among the better known were Alexander Irvine, who had arranged the details of Jack London’s lecture at Yale in 1906; George Lunn, who served for a time as mayor of Schenectady, New York; John Haynes Holmes, pastor of New York’s Community Church; Irwin St. John Tucker, an editor of the *Christian Socialist* and initiator of a socialist pulpit at St. Mark’s Church in New York; Norman Thomas, presidential candidate of the Socialist party from the twenties through the forties; and Professors Thomas C. Hall and Charles Fagnani of Union Theological Seminary. In a lecture before the Columbia chapter, Professor Fagnani once suggested that those who objected to socialism because of the name might perhaps want to

substitute some other name, such as “neo-Christianism,” or “co-operative individualism.” But whatever the name, it was clear to him that socialists wished to make life “more sacred.” When men and women no longer needed to spend most of their time and energies struggling for the bare necessities, they would have more leisure to attend to their ethical and intellectual growth. Perhaps the most straightforward connection between socialism and Christianity was made by the Reverend H. W. Smith, pastor of the Universalist Church in Middletown, Connecticut. Leading a discussion meeting of the Wesleyan ISS chapter on whether a Christian could become a socialist, he answered affirmatively; for it was obvious to him that “the whole object of Socialism was merely to carry out the instruction in the sermon on the Mount.”<sup>14</sup>

### III

The position of the ISS on the American labor movement closely paralleled that of the Socialist party leadership. Influential socialists, such as Morris Hillquit, William English Walling, John Spargo, and Victor L. Berger, believed that American socialism needed a strong base in the working class if the party ever hoped to approach the strength of the European Socialist parties. For as Jessie Wallace Hughan—like Hillquit, Walling, and Spargo a prominent member of the ISS—shrewdly observed, without such a base, without workers as allies, the Socialist party could “never hope to rise from a cult to a power.”<sup>15</sup> Thus American socialists attempted aggressively to enlist the trade unions in the cause of socialism. They made steady progress and eventually gained the support of some of the largest unions, including a number of international unions.

What puzzled and often infuriated the socialists was the bitter enmity to their cause of Samuel Gompers and most of the top leadership in the American Federation of Labor. While most of the European labor leaders were committed to socialism, the AFL hierarchs were for the

most part adamantly opposed to the socialist philosophy and committed to the bread-and-butter unionism espoused by Gompers. Some prominent socialists did, of course, enjoy close relations with various AFL unions. Hillquit, for example, was on excellent terms with the needle trades unions in New York; Berger was the most powerful labor leader in Milwaukee and, as president of his local Typographical Union, a frequent delegate to AFL conventions; James H. Maurer rose to the presidency of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor; Max Hayes, Cleveland socialist and labor leader, ran against Gompers in the 1912 election for the presidency of the AFL and received nearly one-third of the vote. Nevertheless, socialists were a minority within the AFL, though one of considerable strength and influence. Although they held little hope of converting Gompers and his lieutenants, they believed that union members could be won over. In appealing directly to the rank and file of labor, socialists sought not only to make converts but also to persuade workers to oust their conservative leaders.<sup>16</sup>

The ISS reflected the ambivalent attitude of the Socialist party toward the labor movement. On the one hand, the society praised the role of the unions in improving the lot of working men and women; on the other hand, it was decidedly cool toward Gompers and the AFL high command, who had long since abandoned belief in the cooperative commonwealth once shared by some of them and made their peace with the capitalist system. Just the same, socialist leaders often urged ISS audiences to join the trade union movement. At an ISS convention, for example, Herbert M. Merrill, a socialist member of the New York Assembly, attempted to persuade the delegates that the “intellectual proletariat” ought to join forces with the working class. Victor Berger was more specific. He assured the delegates that the socialist movement would grow more rapidly if socialists were to join labor unions and work with, rather than against, them. His plea was greeted by icy silence. A British visitor found it difficult to understand the hostility of American socialists to Samuel Gompers and the AFL. At an ISS-sponsored meeting in New York’s Carnegie Hall, Keir Hardie, chairman of the British Labour Party in the House of Commons, urged socialists to make common cause with the American labor movement. Gompers

had rendered great service to the union movement, Hardie declared; once his listeners had done as much for the socialist movement as Gompers had done for the trade unions, they would be in a better position to criticize him.<sup>17</sup>

As already noted, the ISS took great care to avoid any possible identification with other organizations, including the Socialist party. This position even precluded ISS participation in labor's traditional May Day Parade. One year an ISS contingent "with all their college flags a-flying," marched with some sixty thousand garment workers, shirt-waist makers, tailors, carpenters, firemen, bakers, among others. The following year Laidler was instructed by the executive committee to inform the chapters in New York City and vicinity that the ISS as an organization "did not consider it wise" to participate in such demonstrations, but that individual chapters were, of course, free to join the march.<sup>18</sup> Still, despite its opposition to the official AFL leadership, the ISS often attempted to assist the labor movement as well as individual unions in a practical way. For example, in the campaign for the enactment of legislation for Workmen's Compensation in New York, a campaign organized by a Joint Labor Conference on Workmen's Compensation, the New York alumni chapter offered the services of its members. During the strike of the shirt-waist makers, Morris Hillquit lionized the strikers at a packed Carnegie Hall meeting attended by prominent New Yorkers. Although the meeting was not organized by the ISS, its banner flew along those of other organizations. At an ISS-sponsored dinner Elsie Cole, a Vassar student, told of the plight of the striking women and collected funds for their support.<sup>19</sup>

The Harvard Socialist Club came to the defense of the university's twenty cleaning women, affectionately known as "goodies." The Massachusetts State Minimum Wage Commission had requested Harvard to raise the women's wages from thirty-five cents to thirty-seven cents an hour. Instead of complying Harvard fired them, but public protest led the university to reverse its decision for all except nine of the women who, according to the university, were too old to do the work. Denouncing the "ruthless attitude" toward working people of Harvard University, "a hundred million dollar corporation," and of the

wealthy businessmen who controlled it, the Harvard Socialist Club asked that the nine women be given a pension. If Harvard decided to replace its horses with trucks, the chapter asserted, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would see to it that the horses would not simply be turned out on the street. The least that Harvard could do was to provide the women with unemployment insurance while they were looking for other jobs.<sup>20</sup>

The Harvard Socialist Club also organized a meeting on the Boston Common in support of the striking workers of the Suffolk Knitting Company. Standing on a soap box before about three hundred people the Reverend Paul B. Blanshard, assistant pastor of Boston's Maverick Church, denounced capitalists, the police, and federal district judges, before one of whom he had recently been arraigned for "obstructing a public highway for more than seven minutes." The colorful ISS chapter at the New York Dental College attacked the use of phosphor in matches because of its harmful effect on workers in the match industry. Men, women, and children producing the matches, the chapter's journal claimed in an editorial, were subject to the rapid loss of their teeth and, in some cases, rotting jawbones, necessitating removal and causing disfigurement. The editorial strongly supported the Esch bill, then pending before the U.S. Congress, which would put a high tax on the use of white or yellow phosphorus in matches, thereby making its use prohibitive. As a parting shot, the editorial writer attacked the editors of dental journals and the "high priests" of the profession for keeping silent on this issue, while campaigning virtuously for public awareness of the need for better oral hygiene.<sup>21</sup>

One practice the ISS found particularly abhorrent was the use of college students as strikebreakers. When the executive committee learned that employers had engaged students to break a strike of hotel and restaurant waiters, the committee condemned the practice and expressed confidence that it would meet with "wide reprobation" among American college students. The same year, in connection with a strike of Brooklyn shoe cutters, the executive committee passed a second resolution, again condemning student strikebreakers and declaring that those who were enjoying the benefits of higher education "should aid,

rather than hinder, their fellow men in their struggles for an ever higher standard of living....”<sup>22</sup> At the ISS convention of 1912, the problem was discussed at considerable length. George W. MacDonald, a delegate from the Meadville Theological Seminary, introduced a resolution passed by his chapter, condemning students who stooped to scabbing and requesting the ISS to take an official position at the convention. Alfred Jaretzki, president of the Harvard Socialist Club, opposed the resolution, declaring it would be inconsistent for the ISS, an organization formed for the purpose of studying socialism, to take an official stand on the issue. Such action, he warned, would antagonize many nonsocialist members and cause them to charge that the ISS was merely a propaganda arm of the Socialist party. Cautious as ever, Alexander Trachtenberg, the Yale delegate, suggested that the question should not be decided by the convention but left to the discretion of individual chapters. Graham Stokes, the society’s president who generally refused to commit the ISS to a particular position on any controversial issue, for once threw caution to the wind: he strongly supported the resolution and pleaded for its adoption. He was joined by Gustav Egloff, then a graduate student at Columbia, who argued that no socialist worthy of the name could have the slightest sympathy for any man who took the job of a striking workingman. In the end the convention adopted MacDonald’s motion with only one dissenting vote.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the ISS more or less adopted the position of the Socialist party. Most socialists generally favored industrial unionism and thus had no quarrel with the Wobblies on that account. In fact, John Spargo, a harsh critic of the IWW, contended that its rise was due largely to the fact that the AFL had neglected to educate and organize the large masses of unskilled workers and that the IWW had moved to fill the void. At the same time, however, Spargo insisted that by forming a separate organization, the IWW had hindered rather than helped the growth of industrial unionism in the American labor movement.<sup>24</sup> Spargo’s criticism went to the heart of the matter, for by organizing a separate union the IWW touched a raw nerve in the collective memory of the socialist movement. Most of the



important leaders of the Socialist party, except for Eugene Debs and Algie Simons, opposed the IWW from the beginning. They opposed it because they distrusted Daniel De Leon, who had participated in founding the new union. Socialists remembered that once before De Leon had split the movement by organizing a dual union, his Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance. Moreover, socialists continued to believe that the rank and file of the AFL could be won over to socialism by patient work within the labor movement. Lastly, while continuing to favor industrial unionism, socialist leaders like Debs, Berger, and Hillquit—by 1908 even Debs had given up on the Wobblies—opposed the tendency toward syndicalism within the IWW and the casual advocacy of industrial sabotage by some of its leaders. The distrust was mutual; as a result, the Socialist party and the IWW “maintained an uneasy, tenuous relationship—sometimes fighting, sometimes cooperating, but seldom understanding each other.”<sup>25</sup>

The ISS too was uneasy about the new union established in 1905. Shortly after the IWW had been organized, Charles O. Sherman, its president, invited W. J. Ghent, secretary of the ISS, to serve on the contributing staff of the *Industrial Worker*, an IWW journal then being planned. Refusing Sherman’s invitation, Ghent replied that he regarded the movement “as at least untimely, if not wholly misguided, and as calculated to do the greatest harm to the cause of the working class.”<sup>26</sup> Ghent’s views undoubtedly reflected the position of the ISS leadership. Among the major figures in the ISS perhaps only Walling understood the dynamics of the IWW. At an ISS convention, he told the delegates that the IWW was performing important work. Although he had reservations about the union’s syndicalism, he fully supported the principle of industrial unionism. The movement, he continued, had its origin in the struggle of the working class for its own liberation, and it deserved to be supported because socialists supported every action of working people fighting for their rights. On another occasion, Rose Pastor Stokes criticized the AFL for its failure to encourage industrial unionism, which she considered essential for effective mass action by workers. She praised the IWW for doing valuable work in organizing



the unskilled workers neglected by the AFL and for arousing in them a spirit of militancy.<sup>27</sup>

The 1912 Lawrence textile workers' strike, which was led by the IWW, created a stir among ISS chapters in the East. According to Laidler, students from Barnard, Union Theological Seminary, and other colleges picketed strikebound mills, risking arrest because of the widespread use of injunctions. Chapters organized public lectures on industrial unionism, featuring among others, Lincoln Steffens, Rose Pastor Stokes, and the Irish labor leader Jim Larkin. The Harvard Socialist Club attempted to arouse sympathy for the striking workers. Neither the "conservative" AFL nor the state had helped the workers in any way, wrote Gerard C. Henderson, chapter president. We might disagree with their methods, and we might even believe that upholding the law was more important than justice for the strikers. But we could not refuse them our sympathy, because they had been exploited by their employers as well as their leaders. Those who had come to lead the strike (notably William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, Joseph Ettor, and Arturo Giovannitti) were regarded by them as heroes.<sup>28</sup>

Following the seizure of the children of striking mill workers by the Lawrence police,<sup>\*</sup> the Socialist club of Union Theological Seminary adopted a protest resolution which was signed by 118 students of the Seminary. Addressing the governor of Massachusetts and the mayor of Lawrence, the students condemned the action of the police

as an incitation to violence, as an unwarrantable infringement of the constitutional rights of the parents, and as a disregard of human rights. It appears pitiless and grossly unjust, in that it forces upon helpless and innocent children the hunger and suffering of a prolonged strike.

The protesters urged the officials "to take steps that justice may be rendered."<sup>29</sup>

Under the brilliant leadership of the IWW, the textile workers won their strike. The prestige of the Wobblies soared, and there was a resurgence of interest in industrial unionism. In January 1913 the ISS

sponsored a meeting in New York's Carnegie Hall, at which Graham Stokes presided. Frank Bohn, still a member of the IWW as well as the Socialist party, explained the principles of industrial unionism; Arturo Giovannitti, Wobbly poet and mystic, discussed the much misunderstood doctrine of industrial sabotage; Joseph Ettor, IWW agitator and skilled organizer, explained the objectives of his union; and Max Hayes, editor of the socialist *Cleveland Citizen* and an AFL official, declared his support for industrial unionism. Rose Pastor Stokes entertained the audience by reading one of Giovannitti's poems.<sup>30</sup> Bill Haywood, the most popular of the IWW leaders, was not present in Carnegie Hall. At the time of the meeting, a mail ballot of the Socialist party membership was under way to determine whether he would keep his seat on the party's national executive committee. Shortly thereafter Haywood was recalled from the committee for his anti-political stand in a New York speech. Interestingly, Graham Stokes joined more than two dozen others, including William English Walling, Frank Bohn, Walter Lippmann, Louis B. Boudin, Rose Pastor Stokes, and Max Eastman, in protesting the attempt to recall Haywood, an action initiated by the New York State Socialist Party.<sup>31</sup> If any single person was on the "left" of the party, it was Big Bill, but the signers of the protest represented a wide range of socialist political tendencies; their joint action on behalf of Haywood suggests once again the futility of attaching precise political labels to the prewar Socialist party, much less the ISS.

As the ISS saw it, its mission with respect to the labor movement was primarily educational. The Carnegie Hall meeting on industrial unionism served that purpose, as did the many lectures, dinners, and conferences on various aspects of trade union practice. One of the staples of every ISS convention was the "question box" session, a freewheeling affair at which ISS notables answered questions from student delegates about an impressive number of contemporary topics. At one such session, Walling and Miss Hugan replied to questions about industrial unionism, syndicalism, the abolition of the wage system, compulsory arbitration, the liquor problem, class consciousness, and the relation of college students to the working class. In connection with the last subject, the ISS frequently reminded its chapters that while

working people appreciated the help that college-educated men and women could provide, the working class was fully capable of developing a sound strategy in its struggle for a better life. College students, Algernon Lee told the CCNY chapter, should not be unduly impressed with their college education, because this might lead them to assume a patronizing attitude toward working people.<sup>32</sup>

## IV

Educated women were as comfortable in the ISS as they were in the Socialist party. Vida D. Scudder, a member of the ISS executive committee, thought it significant “that the Socialist was first among political parties to give women an equal voice with men in public affairs and an equal share in managing the movement.” She also considered it worthy of note that the Socialist party had always included a suffrage plank in its platform. Socialists, in fact, went considerably beyond that. As James Weinstein notes, they actively campaigned for the adoption of woman suffrage in those states denying it. They introduced resolutions favoring woman suffrage in states where the party was represented in the legislature. And in Nevada, Kansas, and New York they contributed to the victory of woman suffrage.<sup>33</sup> Miss Scudder was by no means the only woman on the ISS executive committee. During one two-year period, from April 1912 to March 1914, nearly one-third of the committee’s members were women. And the ISS wasted no time in announcing its support of woman suffrage. At the society’s first convention in 1910, the delegate of the University of Pennsylvania introduced a resolution supporting equal suffrage and committing the ISS to full cooperation with the suffrage movement in all its battles. Interestingly, two women objected to the resolution. Helen Stokes argued that socialists were already committed to woman suffrage and a new resolution was, therefore, unnecessary. Rose Pastor Stokes objected to the broad sweep of the resolution. To commit the ISS to cooperation with the suffrage movement in every single case, she maintained, would

run counter to the spirit of similar resolutions recently adopted by women members of the New York Socialist party branch. After the resolution had been amended, the convention resolved:

That we emphatically endorse the movement for woman suffrage, and also that *wherever possible*, in conformity with the principles of Socialism, we will cooperate with the woman suffrage movement.<sup>34</sup> (Emphasis added.)

As a strong supporter of woman suffrage, the ISS took a special interest in the women's colleges. As already noted, Helen Stokes and Mary Sanford, long-time members of the executive committee, toured these colleges regularly and developed expertise in organizing chapters. To get its message to college women, the ISS asked the managing editor of *The Socialist Woman* to write an article that would appeal particularly to female students. In accepting the assignment, the editor agreed to circulate the issue carrying the article among college women, on condition that it appear exclusively in her paper. When Charlotte Perkins Gilman, one of the signers of the call for the organization of the ISS, addressed the Barnard Socialist Club, she discussed the position of women in contemporary society as well as various theories regarding their status in earlier societies. One of the goals of socialism, she declared, was to abolish or mitigate the ferocious struggle between individuals and replace it with the ideal of service to mankind. Since women tended to possess the traits of love, devotion, and self-sacrifice, they were preeminently qualified to work for the attainment of socialism.<sup>35</sup>

As one might expect, the Barnard Socialist Club took a lively interest in woman suffrage. Although a Suffrage club was then in existence at Barnard, student interest in its activities appeared to be minimal. In a letter to the editor of the college paper, the Socialist club attacked the "cold indifference" of Barnard students to the "live questions" agitating society. It was disgraceful, the club stated, that not more than twenty of the more than five hundred Barnard students had come to hear one Dr. Aylesworth lecture on the progress of the woman suffrage movement in

Colorado at a recent meeting of the Barnard Suffrage Club. As early as 1911 the Socialist and Suffrage clubs of Barnard decided to hold joint meetings. At one of these, Anita Cahn Block, a Barnard alumna and associate editor of the *New York Call* in charge of its woman's department, described the long struggle of women for equal suffrage as primarily a class or economic struggle. Employers were opposed to equal suffrage, she asserted, because they feared the loss of cheap labor if women gained the franchise. Some years later Juliet Stuart Poyntz, another Barnard graduate who was then associated with the Rand School of Social Science, praised the cooperation between the two clubs in a letter to the student paper. She considered their "friendly relations" as a clear indication that at least some Barnard students were beginning to grasp that the struggle for political democracy was closely related to the struggle for industrial and social democracy. She also saw evidence that Barnard students were beginning to understand that their education imposed on them the responsibility to serve society and that they ought to help "their less fortunate working sisters" gain their rights. Working women could gain their rights "by vote and strike, by trade union and political activity."<sup>36</sup>

A few days after the Poyntz letter, the *Barnard Bulletin* in an editorial took note of rumors that the Feminist and Socialist clubs were "running things" and that the *Bulletin* was allied with them. The editorial writer denied that the paper had any particular radical orientation. At the same time, she emphasized that the paper desired and ought to represent "the live interests" of Barnard and that it had to pay close attention to the work of active leaders. At any rate, trouble was brewing between the Barnard Socialist Club and the Feminist Forum. At a joint meeting of the clubs, some students expressed the view that the socialists were dominating the feminists; others disagreed. There was a vague feeling that the alliance between the two clubs was harming the Feminist Forum though nobody was able to say just why this was so. In any event, those attending the meeting endorsed the formation of a Social Science League, which would bring together "the less partisan girls" with those of the Socialist and Feminist clubs to provide a forum for all points of view on current social and economic issues. Reporting this development

at the ISS convention in 1915 Laidler noted approvingly that recently several other chapters had also coordinated their efforts with other campus organizations of an “intellectual character.”<sup>37</sup> What he neglected to mention was that ISS chapters were under increasing pressure from college administrators as a result of the European war, which was throwing a lengthening shadow over the country. In combining forces with other campus groups while at the same time retaining organizational independence, ISS chapters were at least in part attempting to insure their own survival.

Virginia Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College, greeted the formation of the Social Science League with obvious relief. In chapel she left no doubt that she saw certain advantages in the new league, which was to hold open forums under neutral auspices rather than under those of “propagandist clubs.” The year following its organization, the Barnard Social Science League presented a “merry little skit” ridiculing those who were opposed to female suffrage. In “The Armory,” which was set in the year 2000, women were opposing male suffrage on the ground that the franchise would make men “unmanly.”<sup>38</sup> Although the Barnard Socialist Club participated in the open forums sponsored by the Social Science League, it retained its independence and continued to function as a chapter of the ISS. The study of socialism and other movements of social reform remained the chapter’s central concern, but its members continued to cultivate their special interest in the suffrage movement and the problems of women in the modern world.<sup>39</sup>

Although the ISS supported full equality for women, its attitude on sex was rather conventional, even puritanical. “We have to be so careful on the sex question,” Caro Lloyd Strobell advised John Spargo, “lest we influence the college boy and girl readers in their own personal sex theories. Spargo had prepared a book review for the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, and Mrs. Strobell, the journal’s associate editor and a member of the ISS executive committee, was attempting to have Spargo make certain changes. The review, she wrote, “is laudatory of a girl who violates the accepted standards of the circles where our magazine circulates.” She suggested that Spargo add a few words criticizing the girl’s conduct; otherwise, Spargo’s name under an article that appeared



to approve unreservedly the conduct of a girl who had been “unconventional sexually” might well give a wrong impression to his readers.<sup>40</sup>

While the Socialist party actively worked for women’s rights, it made no special effort to help the Negro, North or South. Socialists held widely diverging views on the Negro, ranging from Stokes’s and Walling’s active concern for the improvement of his condition to the blatant racism of Victor Berger. Certainly the Socialist party was not segregationist. Though there were separate Negro locals in a few Jim Crow states, in the North Negroes belonged to the same party locals as whites and membership records made no reference to race. Whatever their opinions on the Negro, socialists generally fully agreed with the position of the party that the salvation of the Negro ultimately depended upon the liberation of the working class, white or black, from the yoke of capitalism. Even Berger, the white supremacist, was convinced that the capitalist system degraded the Negro; hence he agreed with the party that the struggle of the working class had to take precedence over the fight for Negro rights.<sup>41</sup>

Like the Socialist party, the ISS as an organization took little note of the Negro, partly, one suspects, because Negroes were only a tiny fraction of the student population. On the other hand, not a single individual influential in the ISS could ever be accused of publicly voicing racist sentiments, as did Victor Berger, Max Hayes, Ernest Untermann, J. Stitt Wilson, and Joshua Wanhope, all of them prominent in the party. On the positive side, a substantial number of leading figures in the ISS played a crucial role in launching the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As David A. Shannon observes, if any single individual deserved credit for this initiative, it was William English Walling, a signer of Sinclair’s call for the founding of the ISS and later a member of its executive committee. After witnessing the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois, Walling wrote a number of articles on the incident and arranged a series of meetings in his New York home, which set the stage for further action. Walling served as chairman of the National Negro Committee which eventually became the NAACP. Other ISS notables who served with



Walling were Paul Kennaday and Mary W. Ovington and such frequent ISS lecturers as Charles E. Russell and the Reverend John Haynes Holmes. Among the sixty signers of a call for the first national conference of what was to become the NAACP were six members or future members of the ISS executive committee. In addition to Miss Ovington and Walling, they were Graham Stokes, president of the ISS; Florence Kelley, Stokes's successor in the presidency; Helen Stokes; and Professor Charles Zueblin.<sup>42</sup>

Organizing college chapters in any of the southern colleges proved extremely difficult, and it is likely that none were in existence in the South before 1915.\* In the spring of 1916, the ISS made the first systematic attempt to reach students in that section. Harry Laidler, that tireless traveler, spoke before 6,000 students in 21 colleges and universities and reported that he had organized 8 chapters. Among the institutions he visited were Johns Hopkins, Howard, the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, the University of South Carolina, "and a few of the colored colleges of the South."<sup>43</sup> Later that year Rose Pastor Stokes toured a number of southern colleges for the ISS. At the University of South Carolina she addressed the ISS chapter and was cordially received by Professor Josiah Morse, chairman of the department of psychology and philosophy. Asked by her host whether she would also like to speak at Benedict College in Columbia, she expressed surprise that it had been omitted from her itinerary. Morse explained simply that the college was "colored." Mrs. Stokes visited the college, addressed the students several times and, with the permission of the college's president, a Dr. Valentine, organized a chapter with twenty-seven members. When Morse heard this news, he seemed perturbed. Much to her surprise he told her that if students in any of the southern colleges learned about the organization of an ISS chapter in a Negro college, this news would effectively destroy everything that had been accomplished thus far and put an end to all further interest and effort. When Mrs. Stokes countered that "young Southern Gentlemen" surely would not cease studying socialism even if black students were studying the subject in their own segregated colleges, Morse delicately brought up the possibility of Negro delegates meeting white delegates in

ISS conventions and conferences. He strongly advised her not to list Benedict College as an ISS chapter on the society's letterhead.

Unaware of southern realities, Mrs. Stokes ignored Morse's advice and urged the ISS to mail its study course to William McKinley Scott, secretary of the Benedict chapter.<sup>44</sup> But Benedict College did not appear on the roster of ISS chapters, seemingly because the ISS deemed it inadvisable. Only a month after Mrs. Stokes's tour of the South, John Spargo also visited some of the southern colleges and reported his findings to President Stokes. According to Stokes, Spargo had made cautious inquiries among socialists and ISS sympathizers regarding the possibility of establishing college chapters in Negro colleges. Quoting Spargo, Stokes informed Laidler that in each instance Spargo was told to desist; for the organization of chapters in these colleges "would make it quite impossible for us to work in the white colleges, and set back the Socialist cause many years."<sup>45</sup>

W.E.B. Du Bois, then a member of the society's executive committee, forcefully put the Negro problem before the ISS at its summer conference in 1917. Taking note of the concern expressed by various delegates about freedom of speech in wartime, Du Bois wondered why the speakers did not discuss the position of the Negro, which they were perfectly free to do. He accused the delegates of sharing in "the conspiracy of silence" surrounding the Negro question because they lacked the will to speak out and preferred instead to listen to someone like him give a twenty-minute speech on the subject. Eugene Debs expressed his agreement with Du Bois' views in the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, which had previously printed Du Bois' attack. The issue of Negro rights, wrote Debs, could no longer be safely ignored by the American people, for it was an issue that threatened the survival of the nation. He accused his fellow socialists and the AFL of skirting the problem "with a timidity bordering on cowardice"; at the same time, he advised his "black brethren" that they alone could bring about their liberation by organizing their working people and exercising their power "industrially and politically...."<sup>46</sup> Possibly reacting to Du Bois' attack, the ISS in a list of topics suggested for discussion by its chapters, included one on "The Negro Problem and the War." The society also

recommended that chapters read several of Du Bois' recent articles, including his attack on the ISS. If the ISS failed to take bold steps to organize Negro colleges, it did perform considerable spade work in preparing the ground for future progress. Some years after the war Du Bois himself, then editor of *The Crisis*, recognized the society's contribution. "The Intercollegiate Socialists," he wrote, "did a great work in training toward a real democratic ideal...."<sup>47</sup>

## V

Among the allies most eagerly sought by the ISS were faculty members in colleges and universities. A sympathetic professor, the ISS recognized, could further its work in a number of ways. By endorsing the purpose of the society, for example, a popular professor could enhance the standing of a particular chapter as well as the prestige of the national organization. Moreover, since chapter continuity presented a perennial problem in many institutions, the assistance of a sympathetic teacher could prove invaluable after the chapter's officers were graduated and a new but inexperienced group of officers was ready to take over. A third reason for cultivating faculty members was their ability to open their classrooms, or even the faculty club, to the ISS organizer and other ISS speakers. Finally, faculty members were often in a position to act as intermediaries between a chapter and the college administration in cases where the latter attempted to interfere in chapter activities. These, then, were some of the reasons why the ISS asked both socialist and nonsocialist professors to endorse the study of socialism and to allow the use of their names on the society's letterhead and in its publications. On one occasion President Stokes reported to the ISS executive committee that he had written to 50 professors, asking them to endorse the aim of the society. Of the 21 who responded, 9 were favorable, 10 were sympathetic but refused permission to use their names, while only 2 were unfavorable. Among the early endorsers were Charles A. Beard of Columbia, Kuno Francke of Harvard, George R.

Wicker of Dartmouth, Vida D. Scudder of Wellesley, and F. A. McKenzie of Ohio State.<sup>48</sup> In time the ISS would point with pride to the names of about fifty professors gracing its letterhead as endorsers of the society's objective.

For their part, college teachers endorsed the purpose of the society for reasons of their own, depending in part on their own political and social outlook and in part on how secure they felt within the institutions that employed them. For example, when the ISS asked Professor Beard to contribute an article to the first issue of the *Intercollegiate Socialist* giving his reasons why students should study socialism, he replied that it was self-evident to him that college men and women who presumably came to college in pursuit of knowledge ought to take an intelligent interest in the subject. At a time when socialism "is admittedly shaking the old foundations of politics" throughout the world and strongly influencing literature, art, and science, it seemed obvious to him that the need to study socialism did not require formal justification. And since he was unable to comprehend the intellectual outlook of any person who denied this proposition, he felt unqualified to change that person's opinions even in a lengthy article. Another nonsocialist, Professor Willard C. Fisher, chairman of the economics department at Wesleyan University, told the members of the Wesleyan ISS chapter he considered it of great importance that they were studying socialism and encouraged them to persist. "Those who scoff at the socialist movement," he told a chapter meeting, "are much similar to those who told Noah that only a shower was coming." Professor Irving Fisher, chairman of the economics department at Yale, gave a more practical reason for his support. Fisher, who had been elected an honorary member of the society's Yale chapter, informed an apprehensive *New York Times* that he and the members of his department favored the open discussion of socialism as "a safeguard against the blind acceptance" of socialist doctrine. He assured the *Times* that the Yale Society for the Study of Socialism was in fact a study group and not a propaganda organization. From his own observation he could vouch for the fact that a majority of the chapter's members were nonsocialists and that some of them were antisocialists. Though "each group tries to convert the other," he wrote,

no group attempts to “use” the chapter for its own purposes. Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman, the noted Columbia economist, agreed that every student ought to have a thorough knowledge of socialism, but he added quickly that students could gain a more rounded knowledge of socialism by studying economics.<sup>49</sup>

Socialist professors also gave varying reasons for supporting the study of socialism and the establishment of college chapters under ISS auspices. Professor Frank C. Doan who taught systematic theology at Meadville Theological Seminary, maintained that ISS study chapters supplemented the work of sociology departments, but that study chapters were able to discuss pressing social and economic problems with the kind of freedom that usually did not prevail in “the more deliberate and dispassionate atmosphere of the university lecture-room.” Additionally, ISS chapters were performing a valuable service for the college community at large by sponsoring public lectures, thereby providing an opportunity for students to hear “certain social and political radicals” who might otherwise remain unknown to them. Professor Vladimir Karapetoff of Cornell considered the establishment of some kind of socialist group in every college in the country as “inevitable.” He thought it fortuitous, therefore, that these clubs were being organized under the guidance of the ISS, an organization led by “mature and public-spirited men and women, persons of national prominence and unquestionable integrity.” In an obvious allusion to conditions in his native Russia, he complimented those college administrators who were permitting ISS chapters to work without interference; it seemed clear to him that if chapters were not able to work openly they would exist secretly, with all the attendant evils of illegal activity. Even worse, the slightest hint of persecution and the aura of mystery surrounding a chapter resulting therefrom would lead to activities “less tolerant and more radical than is good for young men and women during the period in which their ideas are being formed.” Professor Ernest S. Bates of the University of Arizona thought that the country was moving toward some kind of socialism; the question was whether the movement would be led “by trained thinkers or left to the mercy of demagogues.”<sup>50</sup>

George Louis Arner, a young instructor in sociology at Dartmouth College, provided insight into his predicament as an avowed socialist who was teaching at Dartmouth on a temporary appointment. George R. Wicker “has been stirring things up a little with some near-socialist Economics,” wrote Arner, but to the best of his knowledge he [Arner] was “the first Socialist party member to join the faculty here....” Some of his students “want more Socialism than I feel at liberty to give them in my course in Social Statistics.” Although he was hopeful of reappointment the following year and President Ernest Fox Nichols “is fine,” Arner was apprehensive because “there is still the Board of Trustees to reckon with....” Even the kindly President Nichols seemingly had some reservations about sanctioning an openly socialist study club on his campus. When from 20 to 30 students and 3 faculty members were planning to organize a group to discuss socialism “and other plans for social redemption,” the president had called in Arner and had suggested that it might be better if the words “socialist” or “socialism” did not appear in the name of the proposed organization. President Nichols “is not intolerant,” concluded Arner, “but of course has to look for the source of supplies....” In the end the organizers of the club decided to name it the Social Reform Club, and Arner advised the ISS not to press for affiliation, though suitable ISS speakers would be welcome.<sup>51</sup> That professors, especially those in the smaller colleges, had to exercise caution if they wished to avoid possible conflict with college administrators or trustees is suggested by Laidler’s attempt to gain entry to Hamilton College for Rose Pastor Stokes. Frederick M. Davenport, professor of law and politics at that college and member of the New York State Legislative Committee of the Progressive party, informed Laidler that he would be willing to sponsor Mrs. Stokes’s lecture, provided she agreed to accept his conditions. There would be no advertising or advance notice of Mrs. Stokes’s visit; she would not attempt to organize a chapter at Hamilton; she would refrain from addressing any local socialist group; and Davenport would have full control over all aspects of the Hamilton meeting.<sup>52</sup>

At the fourth ISS convention, delegates reported that as a rule individual instructors seldom refused to help a chapter if requested to do



so. E. O. Smith, professor of economics at Connecticut Agricultural College, suggested to the delegates that it would be unwise to ask for more active faculty participation because this might lead to faculty control. He predicted, moreover, that as socialist influence grew, chapters would come under increasing attack. Although socialist faculty members would certainly attempt to defend freedom of discussion, they would probably be quite busy “maintaining their personal interests.” While socialists “may be thick as blackberries now upon some faculties, they are not very thick as yet upon college governing boards.” We may think of an ISS chapter as just another student club, he told the delegates, but

there is more dynamite in the I.S.S. than in the Deutsche Verein, and we can hardly be surprised if gentlemen of the old school regard us with instinctive apprehension and erect a few barriers to impede our progress.<sup>53</sup>

Faculty cooperation with ISS chapters probably arose from a number of motives.<sup>\*</sup> In part, it was an expression of tolerance for youthful radicalism. Some faculty members were favorable because they were more or less fervent supporters of socialism; others, like Charles Beard, extended support because they were convinced that socialist doctrine was too important to be ignored. Still others, and perhaps all of the foregoing should be subsumed under this rubric, supported ISS chapters for reasons that were not entirely altruistic. Perhaps they were nursing the hope that chapter activities, which were unquestionably stimulating student interest in social and economic problems, might spill over into courses taught by them, particularly in such fields as economics, government, sociology, history, and literature. Finally, some professors cooperated with chapters because they recognized—though they were often inclined to forget—that a close connection existed between the freedom of students to study socialism and the freedom of teachers to teach equally unpopular ideas: that the *Lernfreiheit* of one was closely linked to the *Lehrfreiheit* of the other.



Certainly the ISS made this connection. In a message addressed to members of college chapters, the ISS exhorted all students to help maintain freedom of inquiry in institutions of higher learning. “Your first task,” the message read,

is to resist all attempts to muzzle professors and to provide a forum in the college for all who have a real message to give. The right to know all sides is your birthright, and if you and your fellow students are deprived of that right you will be unable to wrestle with the problems which you must face in the future...,<sup>54</sup>

When Scott Nearing was fired from the University of Pennsylvania, Laidler warned that the real issue was whether universities were to be mere dispensers of conventional truths or centers of learning open to new ideas. College students could advance the cause of academic freedom if they became convinced that the greatest single asset of a university was not its “imposing buildings,” but its scholars who approached their task with vision and courage. Since the modern university consisted of big buildings and expensive laboratories, it needed a great deal of money; to get that money, it was at times “willing to sell its soul.” In all too many cases, universities had become “great educational factories.” Students, he concluded, ought to protest vigorously against any infringement of their heritage of freedom. Paul H. Douglas, president of the Columbia chapter, noted approvingly that at its last meeting the American Sociological Society had devoted several sessions to a discussion of freedom of communication, including the freedom to teach. Shortly thereafter, he added, the American Association of University Professors had been founded in New York, and he asked, “Is ‘the black-coated proletariat’ becoming class conscious?”<sup>55</sup>

The question of academic freedom was discussed at length at the 1915 ISS convention. Laidler reviewed the previous struggles and asserted that what was now at stake was the right of professors to speak out freely on basic economic issues. To safeguard academic freedom, he advocated an end to self-perpetuating boards of trustees; the speedy

organization of faculty members so as to enable them to democratize college governance and resist any encroachment upon their rights; and an economic and educational system which would end the dependence of higher education “on the philanthropy of a few.” Bishop Paul Jones of Utah reported on the forced resignation of several professors at the University of Utah, an action which caused sixteen other professors to resign in sympathy. Those in authority, he declared, were prone to assume that anybody who offered even the slightest criticism of the educational, political, economic, or religious life of the Mormon community was somehow disloyal.<sup>56</sup> Two professors who attended the convention attempted a more subtle analysis of the roots of conflict between professors and college administrators. Doctor George Clarke Cox, who had been forced to resign without any explanation as assistant professor of philosophy at Dartmouth, warned his audience to be aware that any social institution, if attacked, would fight back. A rebel, he declared, must be willing to pay the price. “You can’t expect to be a rebel and have a big bank account.” He had no quarrel with any institution of higher learning that gave reasons for discharging a professor; the fight for academic freedom was directed against those institutions—the great majority, according to Cox—which refused to give the real reasons for dismissing faculty. Doctor Edmund T. Dana, formerly of the University of Minnesota, took issue with those who claimed that it was entirely compatible with the spirit of academic freedom to discharge a professor who was spreading propaganda. The trouble with that notion was that any professor who was dealing with the stuff of life “is bound to be a propagandist.” Dana expressed sympathy for those college presidents who, while not objecting to the teaching of any particular economic doctrine, had to placate “reactionary legislatures” holding the power of the purse over state-supported institutions. The task before the delegates, he concluded, was to persuade the people that absolute truth did not exist and that it was safest in the long run to permit the free exchange of ideas.<sup>57</sup>

Like Laidler, Evans Clark, former ISS student leader at Amherst and then a member of the ISS executive committee, linked attacks on academic freedom with trustee control of institutions of higher learning.

His study of some sixty charters of private and public universities had convinced him that the connection was real, and he likened the power of trustees to that of “czars and kaisers.” Boards of trustees, he told the ISS, “are not only autocracies, but they are Junker autocracies. They are dominated by influential businessmen, bankers, manufacturers, and prominent lawyers tied together and motivated by very definite class interests.” His remedy was to democratize higher education by instituting self-government “under public ownership,” with faculty and students participating more actively in college governance.<sup>58</sup>

Academic freedom, then, was a serious even passionate concern of the ISS. In the relatively tolerant climate before America’s involvement in the Great War, the ISS was making some progress in alerting students to their stake in the protection of academic freedom. But the postwar reaction caused the ISS to abandon old battles and devote its shrinking resources to more pressing concerns. Forced to fight for its very survival after the war, the ISS was no longer in a position to mount a sustained campaign on behalf of academic freedom.

## VI

In the early years of the ISS, attacks from without occurred infrequently. But after 1910 the stepped-up activities of the national office, the rapid growth of college and alumni chapters, and the suspected control of the ISS by the Socialist party began to alarm some segments of the press. Joseph Husslein, S.J., for instance, asserted that the ISS embodied most perfectly socialism’s grand design to use for its own purposes “the power and resources” of higher education. He was particularly alarmed at the plan of the New York alumni chapter to organize members of the professions in New York City and vicinity through specific committees set up to reach teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals. The ISS, he charged, aimed to attract “the moral and intellectual elite of the country.” Thus far, he noted with some relief, that moral elite consisted mainly “of the not inconsiderable

number of Protestant clergymen” who were already giving the ISS their full support. The *New York Times*, too, viewed developments with alarm. Noting editorially the endowment at Columbia University of a laboratory of politics, the writer expressed the hope that this innovation would help dispel the ignorance which had spawned the “luxuriant growth” of socialism in many of the country’s colleges and universities.<sup>[59](#)</sup>

A national magazine charged editorially that, owing to the influence of the ISS in scores of colleges and universities, thousands of college students were “under Socialistic teaching and conviction.” Socialism, the journal warned, was being passed off in the guise of bland reforms; meanwhile, its principles were capturing the minds of young people “through teaching permitted, or in the name of ‘academic freedom’ actually encouraged, in our schools, colleges, universities, and even in theological seminaries.” The editorial called upon “trustees, presidents, and faculties” to combat socialism by introducing appropriate courses which would expose and fight the evils of socialism “by competent analysis in the light of history and economic truth.” If the authorities failed to assume this responsibility, the journal warned darkly, they would surely invite “the sternest censure of the public opinion.” The National Association of Manufacturers attempted to rouse the business community. As a result of a recent trip by the society’s organizer, the NAM’s official organ noted in an editorial, the ISS was rapidly adding chapters in the New England area, and socialism was continuing to spread in the colleges. If “men of standing in their communities” wondered where their college-going sons and daughters were picking up their “fantastic schemes” for changing the world, they ought to drop their complacency and pay close attention to the travels of ISS organizers and speakers. They might then become aware of “the menace to the social order” presented by socialism and take immediate action to fight it.<sup>[60](#)</sup>

The *Milwaukee Sentinel* professed to see a plot by the University of Wisconsin’s Socialist club, which was allegedly attempting to capture control of student government. The Socialist club, the paper charged, had just elected one of its members, one Quincy Jones, as secretary of

the student conference and had also captured a majority of the key committee appointments. Moreover, the group, one of whose leaders was said to be David J. Saposs, was planning to start its own paper in opposition to the *Daily Cardinal*. Edwin E. Witte immediately came to the defense of his friend. He denied that there was any truth in the “sensational news items” published in the *Sentinel*. Jones, he wrote, was not a socialist and had never attended any meeting of the Wisconsin chapter. As was generally known, the Socialist club was an organization devoted not to propaganda, but to the study of socialism. Many of its members were not socialists; as for himself, he had been serving for a number of years as an officer of the Republican club and had campaigned for progressive Republicans in the last state election. Witte charged that “unscrupulous” students had been responsible for feeding false information to the *Sentinel*, and he called on the student conference to drive them off the campus as a matter of high priority.<sup>61</sup>

Inevitably the mounting attacks upon the ISS originating outside the colleges produced the effect intended by their authors. Some, perhaps most, college administrators had always felt vaguely uneasy about having an ISS chapter on their campus, but in the absence of strong pressure from without, administrative interference had been sporadic. Such interference, though still far from fatal, became more pronounced in the years immediately preceding the First World War. At the University of Michigan, for instance, the authorities, without explanation, withdrew permission to use a lecture room for chapter meetings. But through the good offices of the influential YMCA secretary who was a socialist, the chapter was able to hold its meetings in the YMCA building. At Yale, college officials suddenly tripled the rent for the meeting room used by the Yale chapter. But Professor Henry T. Emory and some other members of the economics department came to the rescue and helped raise the required funds. At the beginning of the 1913–14 academic year, the Columbia chapter discovered that a sudden change in rules required student organizations wishing to sponsor public lectures to obtain permission from the secretary of the Institute of Arts and Sciences. It took over two months and prolonged

discussions with numerous college officials to resolve the problem and resume chapter activities.<sup>62</sup>

Even liberal Harvard created obstacles. The Harvard Socialist Club was stymied by a ruling of the Harvard Corporation forbidding the use of university halls “for persistent or systematic propaganda on contentious questions of contemporaneous social, economic, political, or religious interest.” That the ruling may have been aimed as much against the Harvard Men’s League for Woman Suffrage as against the Harvard Socialist Club was small comfort for the club.<sup>63</sup> Since the chapter feared that because of the ruling it would be prevented from holding a scheduled public lecture by Rabbi Charles Fleischer, its executive committee formally petitioned the president and fellows of Harvard University for permission to hear Rabbi Fleischer. The speaker would lecture on social religion, according to the petitioners, who included Gerard C. Henderson, Hiram K. Moderwell, and Samuel A. Eliot, Jr., secretary of the chapter and a grandson of Harvard’s former president, Charles W. Eliot. Rabbi Fleischer had especially requested that the lecture be open to the public and since his topic “is in no way a political one,” the petitioners asked that permission be granted for a public meeting in a university hall. The Harvard Corporation relented and voted to grant the request on condition that the lecture be “open only to members of the University.” The following year Henderson, president of the Harvard chapter, publicly acknowledged that the chapter was flourishing at least in part because of the tolerant climate prevailing in Cambridge. Since the Harvard Socialist Club was widely recognized as the center of campus radicalism, Henderson remarked, Harvard, “the conservative bulwark of the established industrial order,” might have been expected to repress the chapter. Since this had not happened, he considered it “a high tribute to the open-mindedness of the Harvard Corporation, and to the potency of Harvard’s liberal tradition....”<sup>64</sup> Harvard, of course, *was* exceptional, and its liberal traditions did not prevail everywhere.

The society’s quest for allies had unforeseen consequences. Although the cooperation of friendly groups extended the society’s reach and gave it a sense of greater usefulness,<sup>\*</sup> its activities served to alarm the

defenders of the status quo whose expressions of concern could not be taken lightly by college administrators. In time the attacks prepared the way for an erosion of tolerance in some institutions and for outright repression in others. Clearly the socialist professor who claimed that there was more dynamite in the ISS than in the Deutsche Verein sized up the situation correctly. In the end neither the society's insistence that its sole purpose was the study of socialism nor its frequent reminders to college chapters to shun propaganda offered protection against those who were to brand it as dangerous, even subversive.

## Notes

\* An examination of official Socialist party records, particularly the Youth and YPSL Papers, turned up no evidence of an organic connection between the party and the ISS. The collection is known as the Socialist Party of America Papers and is in the Duke University Archives, Durham, North Carolina.

\* One observer estimates that by 1908 three hundred Protestant clergymen were members of the Socialist party. See Dexter Perkins, *The American Way* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), p. 91.

\* The children and their parents were attacked by the police before the children could board the train that was to take them to safety.

\* "There are a few Socialists here," wrote a student at the University of North Carolina in March 1913, "who desire to get in touch with the Intercollegiate." *IS* 1 (Spring-Summer 1913), 18. Nothing seems to have come of it at that time.

\* This is not to suggest that faculties everywhere either countenanced the organization of ISS chapters or cooperated wholeheartedly once they existed. One obvious reason for faculty opposition was distaste for socialism; another reason was the desire to retain local control over student groups. For example, some students at Valparaiso College who wanted to organize an ISS chapter reported that the faculty was opposed, "presumably" because it did not like any campus group having ties with groups in other colleges, much less with a national organization. Cited by Laidler in "Report to Executive Committee Meeting of Feb. 12, 1912," Reports of Organizing Secretary, ISSP.

\* At its annual convention in December 1913, the ISS initiated an effort to link arms with the European socialist student movement. William English Walling described its growth and proposed that an international conference of radical students be held either in Vienna or Brussels the following summer. Upon motion by President Stokes the convention authorized Dr. Herbert Kuhnert, the delegate from the Free Students of Munich, Germany, to contact the British Inter-University Socialist Federation and its counterparts on the continent to make preliminary arrangements with those willing to participate. Plans were completed to hold the conference in Vienna in August 1914, but the outbreak of the European war put an end to the scheme.



## 6

# The Crisis of World War I

If there was one principle which united the parties of the Socialist Second International, it was unbounded belief in working-class opposition to capitalist wars. Proletarian solidarity in the event of war was an article of faith, accepted without question by socialists everywhere. Every congress of the Second International reaffirmed opposition to militarism and imperialism and expressed the conviction that wars were inherent in the capitalist system. Typical of these efforts was the Stuttgart Resolution adopted by the International in 1907. In ringing tones the delegates declared it to be the duty of the international working classes to fight against armaments and of their parliamentary representatives to refuse to approve funds for armaments. Aggressive wars could be prevented only by substituting a popular militia for the present standing armies. If in spite of all efforts there was a threat of war, it was the duty of the international proletariat and their parliamentary representatives to do all in their power to prevent hostilities “by whatever means seem to them most effective, which naturally differ with the intensification of the class war and of the general political situation.” Significantly the International was unable or unwilling to prescribe “the exact form” such action should take.<sup>1</sup>

Yet opposition to war in principle concealed fundamental differences within each national party, differences based on the theoretical positions of the various factions. At the Copenhagen Congress, for example, the French delegation introduced a motion aimed at preventing mobilization at the outbreak of war by means of a general strike. But at the insistence of the powerful German delegation, which had dominated the

International for years, the French motion was rejected. Herr Ledebour, one of the leaders of the socialist contingent in the Reichstag, strongly defended the right of each nation to preserve its freedom of action in its relations with other nations. Thus when war came and the socialists were put to the test, they reacted not in accordance with their brave pronouncements, but according to the logic of the divergent positions they had adopted before the war. All that remained in the face of the collapse of socialist internationalism were pockets of resistance to the insistent demands of nationalism. In each of the warring countries small factions of dissenting socialists refused to compromise their internationalist ideals, proclaimed by their parties for several decades.<sup>2</sup>

American socialists were ill prepared to face the crisis of the European war. Like their European comrades, they had for years preached the gospel of proletarian internationalism; unlike them, they had been preoccupied with domestic policy and had paid scant attention to America's growing involvement abroad since the Spanish-American War.\* Blind belief in working-class solidarity in combination with innocence in foreign affairs help to explain the shock and bewilderment experienced especially by American socialists in August 1914. Harry Laidler, ISS organizing secretary who was in Europe when Austria declared war against Serbia, reflected the confusion in the ranks of the party and the ISS. Contrary to the expectations of American socialists, the European workers, most of whom had voted socialist for decades, had rallied around the colors of their national governments. Even worse, in each of the belligerent countries the socialist parliamentary contingent had voted for credits to finance the war. Laidler had an answer for this seeming paradox. Though socialists were opposed to wars of aggression, he noted in a lengthy article in the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, they had always sanctioned defensive wars. Since Imperial Germany was clearly the aggressor, the western Allies were really fighting in self-defense. But how to explain the inconvenient fact that the German socialists had voted for huge war credits demanded by their aggressor government? Had they refused, Laidler assured his readers, they would have played into the hands of Russian Czarism, which had invaded Germany from the East.<sup>3</sup> For all its imprecision and lack of

conviction, the theory of defensive war had other uses. As we shall see, it could later be used by prowar socialists to justify American intervention on the side of the Allies.

Belief in international proletarian solidarity had proved to be an illusion. As Vida Scudder told the ISS, this notion had been swept aside by events as nothing but “doctrinaire triviality.” The problems of socialism, she declared, were at least as much psychological as they were economic. Economic determinism, though a valuable tool in understanding modern life, had often been pushed too far. And the moral she drew was that “Socialist cant is no better than any other cant....” President Stokes, on the other hand, insisted that “the economic basis” was indeed the primary reason for the present war. In the face of “such colossal disaster induced by insensate lust for greater power” and economic advantage, it was more important than ever that the ISS continue its work of education among students in American colleges and universities. Although Stokes’s views on the war were to undergo considerable change, his position early in the war differed little from that taken by Hillquit. At the first ISS convention immediately following the start of hostilities, Hillquit offered the classic Marxist explanation for the European conflict. He saw the root cause of war in the existing economic system, which had led to overproduction and international rivalry. In the feverish search for markets for their surplus goods and raw materials for their industries, the great industrial nations had inevitably been driven to rivalry and war. At the same convention, Walter Lippmann, then an editor of *The New Republic*, also asserted that the causes of the conflict were primarily economic and that any proposed remedy for war would have to include economic changes. Wayne Wellman, a student leader at Columbia, saw irony in the fact that the same students who had mocked the ideals and aspirations of socialists before the war, now wanted to know why the latter had not prevented its outbreak.\* Stunned and ashamed, the socialist students had remained silent. They had resolved, however, that if fellow students were to ask again why socialists had not stopped the war, the socialist students would reply that they had been unable to stop it because the other side controlled the governments and the armies and the navies.

But they would also tell them that some day “we shall replace your cannon with our common-sense,” and the war makers will then no longer have the power “to push the world into hell.”<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, Alexander Trachtenberg, former president of the Yale chapter who was still in close touch with college chapters, voiced the confusion among the membership. Stung by the apparent betrayal of international solidarity by the European Socialist parties, members of college chapters wanted the ISS to explain the position of these parties and the international socialist movement. Trachtenberg suggested that the ISS develop a special study course on militarism for use by college chapters, and he expressed the hope that the society would take steps to assist the membership. As a first step William English Walling, at the request of the executive committee, edited a collection of original documents containing the views of socialists in Europe and America on the question of war and peace both before and during the present war. It was a massive volume of five hundred pages with a running commentary by Walling; nowhere did he hint that he himself would soon become a “national” socialist and a fervent advocate of U.S. intervention on the side of the Allies. In another move, the ISS convention in December 1914 asked a committee to present a report formulating the society’s views on the problem of militarism. In addition to Trachtenberg, the committee consisted of Stokes, Walling, Paul Douglas of Columbia, and Walter Hinkle of Williams. Unable to reach a consensus, the committee brought in two reports. The majority report urged the ISS to adopt an “antimilitaristic” stance but did not explain what was meant by that term; the minority report was even more innocuous: it urged the membership to give “serious thought” to the question of militarism. The delegates considered the reports and found both of them deficient. The majority report, they felt, was too limited in its recommendation; the minority report seemed superfluous. Unable to agree on a unified stand, the convention tabled the entire subject. Thus by straddling the issue, the delegates signaled their unwillingness to offend either side in the developing controversy over national preparedness.<sup>5</sup>

To stimulate interest in foreign affairs, a subject previously neglected by the ISS, the executive committee authorized the preparation of a brief course in international relations for use by college chapters. Since American socialists had in the past paid little attention to foreign policy, the reading list prepared by Jessie Wallace Hughan and Nicholas Kelley had to lean heavily on nonsocialist authors. A few American and foreign socialists, including Morris Hillquit, George Kirkpatrick, Allan Benson, and Karl Kautsky, were represented, but the bulk of the list consisted of works by a diverse group of authors, including Nicholas Murray Butler, Alfred T. Mahan, Norman Angell, and William James.<sup>6</sup>

## II

Almost from the beginning, the European war created serious tensions within the ISS. In December 1914, at a reception given by the New York alumni chapter for the delegates to the annual convention, Walling, who had an explosive temper, aimed a sharp personal attack at the absent Hillquit, ISS treasurer and member of the executive committee. Presumably, Walling's outburst was prompted by Hillquit's well-known opposition to the war, a position which Walling ascribed to Hillquit's alleged pro-German bias. When Hillquit heard of the attack, he promptly resigned from the ISS, complaining that Walling's tirade had occurred at an official ISS function and that none of the officers present had come to his defense. Stokes and Laidler who responded jointly explained somewhat lamely that the reception had been given by the New York alumni chapter and was, therefore, not an official ISS function. Moreover, they defended their silence by suggesting that the hisses which had greeted Walling's remarks seemed to them a sufficient rebuke. They assured Hillquit of their high personal regard and expressed the hope he would reconsider his resignation. And in an official statement issued on behalf of the ISS executive committee, President Stokes and Secretary Leroy Scott deplored and disavowed Walling's attack; the committee, they explained, was not responsible for

the personal views of its members. Although the executive committee urged Hillquit to reconsider his decision, he refused to do so. Nonetheless, he continued to speak under ISS auspices and to participate in its functions.<sup>7</sup>

The ISS was deeply concerned about the growing clamor in the country for increased armaments. Early in 1915 Paul Kennaday, a long-time member of the ISS executive committee, declared that the United States was and ought to remain unprepared for war. This country would then be universally regarded as a disinterested nation and be listened to with respect by the war-weary peoples of the belligerent countries, should it propose that armaments be reduced. At the society's 1915 Labor Day conference, Jessie W. Hughan, like Kennaday a senior member of the executive committee, urged socialists to oppose all wars, even so-called defensive wars. Spargo, sounding for all the world like those militant revolutionists whom he had excoriated for years, countered with a hypothetical question. Suppose the German socialists were to rise against their government after the war to secure their political rights, would not the American people be justified in helping the German proletariat, "even at the point of the bayonet?" Nobody, it seems, was prepared to face that issue or do battle with Spargo. Walling ignored the issue of defensive war altogether and concentrated instead on a proposed referendum of the Socialist party which would make it illegal for the United States to supply ammunition to the Allied powers. Walling, whose sympathy for the Allied cause was beginning to show, strongly opposed the referendum.<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1915 the ISS invited playwright George Bernard Shaw to lecture under its auspices, if he planned to visit America the following winter. Shaw replied that he did not intend to visit the United States anytime soon; but even if he did come, he doubted that the ISS would welcome him on its lecture platform. For he would counsel America to arm to the teeth, build a two-ocean navy, and budget two billion dollars for armaments instead of one. Once again it fell to Miss Hughan to uphold the pacifist position. She questioned whether American preparedness would really guarantee peace, for was it not obvious that England and Germany had been exceedingly well prepared



yet had just the same gone to war. The preparedness advocates in every nation, she charged, were guilty of gross self-deception: that one's own nation would under no circumstances become the aggressor, and that a potential antagonist would never attack a nation that was well prepared but only a weaker nation. Better alternatives to military preparedness, she believed, would be improved communication, open diplomacy, and popular education which would be "broadly patriotic" rather than narrowly nationalistic. Since the ISS carefully avoided taking sides, editor Laidler, who presented the statements of Shaw and Miss Hughan in the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, added the disclaimer that the ISS "neither endorses nor opposes" their positions.<sup>2</sup>

The smoldering conflict over preparedness burst into flames at the next ISS convention. It started quietly enough. Walling, uncharacteristically mild, limited himself to the remark that, historically, socialists opposed offensive wars but sanctioned defensive wars. At the convention dinner, Charles Edward Russell, twice the socialist candidate for governor of New York, made what a Barnard delegate described as a "stirring Rooseveltian plea" for American preparedness. In an emotional appeal to the convention, he painted a grim picture of a victorious German empire swollen by conquest and ready to conquer the United States. Like most socialists, he believed that the root cause of war was the competitive economic system and that there would be war as long as this system endured. But because of the danger posed by Germany, the choice for America was either to acquire the largest army and navy in the world or to disarm completely. Despite its shortcomings, America was still a democracy and the last line of defense against German imperialism. At the end Russell exclaimed, "I am an American, and I say America ought to be defended whatever we may have to criticize about it. It still leads in the vanguard of civilization." Russell's call for preparedness was greeted by the delegates with shouts of disapproval; there was loud hissing when he conjured up the vision of a victorious Germany making war upon a defenseless America. Visibly annoyed, Russell left the hall. After the delegates had quieted down, John Spargo rose to reply. "There is less danger confronting this republic now than at any other time in its



history,” he began. Even if Germany were to conquer large parts of Europe, an unlikely possibility in his judgment, she would be preoccupied for a generation with consolidating her gains and would be in no position to attack the United States. To build a larger military force than that of any other nation would mean giving up our democratic government and adopting the practices of an imperial power. In the end, he warned, such a policy would be self-defeating because other powers, feeling threatened, would be compelled to outdo us. He also alerted the delegates to the growing preparedness campaign in the colleges and universities and saw a danger to democracy in the growth of militaristic propaganda in these institutions. When Spargo finished his rebuttal, the delegates applauded long and loudly. Alexander Trachtenberg also addressed the delegates on “the menace of militarism” in the institutions of higher learning. If the military spirit gained further ground in the colleges, he warned, ISS chapters would be affected adversely. An informal vote of the delegates showed “almost unanimous” opposition against military training in colleges and universities. At Trachtenberg’s suggestion, a committee was appointed to investigate the extent of militarism in institutions of higher learning. In addition to Trachtenberg, the members were John Spargo and George Sokolsky of Columbia.<sup>10</sup>

The committee moved quickly. Early in 1916 it mailed a questionnaire to secretaries of ISS chapters; in institutions without organized chapters, the survey form was addressed to friendly students or professors. Replies were received from about 70 institutions. Of these, 37 reported that a majority of students supported an increase in the armed forces of the United States; 5 reported that students were opposed; 8 stated that students at their institutions were split evenly on the issue; and about 20 institutions reported that their students were indifferent. Significantly, “many correspondents” wrote that the presidents of their institutions “are throwing the weight of their authority and influence” behind the introduction of military training, the formation of batteries and companies, and the enlistment of students in summer camps.\* The committee also found that while the preparedness movement was promoted by organized groups and backed by the

influence of the press and alumni groups, the opposition to it was largely unorganized. Although a “virile opposition movement” existed, the committee concluded nonetheless that those advocating some form of military training “can so far claim greater success among the students....”<sup>11</sup>

### III

ISS college chapters were often less reluctant than the parent organization itself to take sides in the developing controversy over military preparedness. Early in 1915 the Yale chapter, in cooperation with other Yale student organizations, held “a monster anti-militarist meeting,” which was addressed by Hamilton Holt as the principal speaker. The Barnard Socialist Club debated whether the United States should disarm. The majority of the membership favored disarmament and expressed its opposition to the growing agitation for increased armaments. But a minority held that lack of preparedness was no sure guarantee of peace; though unprepared, the United States had gone to war against Spain. The best guarantee of peace, the minority declared, was an “international police” organized by a coalition of powers pledged to enforce the peace.<sup>12</sup> At a mass meeting at Columbia shortly after the sinking of the Lusitania, Professor George W. Kirchwey of the Law School and Professor John Erskine advocated United States neutrality. Paul Douglas offered a resolution which was passed unanimously:

Whereas, we hold that the sinking of the Lusitania was merely another example of premeditated murder with which all war is filled;

Whereas, we believe that in a world of insanity it is the duty of the United States to lead the way to reason; be it resolved, therefore, that we

1. Appeal to our fellow Americans to join us in the determination that the United States shall not go to war with any other people; and

2. That we call on our Government to invite all neutral powers to unite in a permanent league of peace.<sup>13</sup>

Although the report of the meeting does not state specifically whether Douglas acted on behalf of the Columbia Socialist Club, he undoubtedly had the club's support.

The Harvard Socialist Club took to the Boston Common to promote antimilitarist sentiment among the public. R. W. Chubb, president of the chapter the year before and an editor of the *Harvard Crimson*, declared that the worst result of the war was that it deflected people from thinking about those issues at home that concerned them most immediately. He cited particularly such problems as labor troubles, strikes, corrupt political organizations and corrupt judges, and the evil consequences of industrialization. At another meeting on the Common, W. Harris Crook, an Oxford graduate taking graduate courses at Harvard, spoke on the consequences of the war for English democracy. The war, he held, presented the gravest danger to democracy because the "military caste" had been made supreme by the conflict, even in the democracies. Moreover, the claim that a large military establishment would act as a deterrent to war had been exposed as a fallacy. Manifestly, it had not prevented war; and this form of insurance had proven to be the most expensive ever known to man.<sup>14</sup>

In opposing the preparedness campaign, members of ISS chapters had to exercise greater caution than their fellow students. Opponents of the ISS persisted in identifying ISS policies with those of the Socialist party, and these opponents were not unaware that the great majority of socialists strongly opposed the preparedness campaign. In a referendum in 1915, for instance, the party membership overwhelmingly approved the expulsion of any member elected to public office who voted for war or war credits. As Merle Curti observes, moreover, the support of socialists for pacifism tainted the pacifist cause in the eyes of many; the equally strong support of anarchists and leading figures of the IWW only persuaded the leaders of the preparedness movement that pacifism and social radicalism were but two sides of the same coin.<sup>15</sup>

In some institutions, interference with chapter activities increased noticeably after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. For years the

Columbia Socialist Club had been allowed to hold meetings open to students and faculty in Earl Hall auditorium. Suddenly in October 1914 permission was withdrawn, and further meetings were restricted to club members. The faculty religious advisory committee, Paul Douglas wrote to President Butler, had informed the club that university rules limited campus political organizations to one public meeting a year in university buildings. After the club's first meeting the use of Earl Hall auditorium was denied for the rest of the academic year and a small room was assigned instead, effectively precluding the possibility of reaching the bulk of Columbia students. The Columbia Socialist Study Club, argued Douglas, was not a political organization because its sole purpose "is to study and to examine, and not to proselyte." Of the more than thirty club members, only two were members of the Socialist party, and some of the members were opposed to socialism. Thus the club did not come under the university ruling—a ruling, moreover, which had never been invoked during the many years the club had held open meetings in Earl Hall. To clinch his case, Douglas noted that the Columbia Socialist Study Club had the endorsement of Professors Charles A. Beard, William P. Montague, and Henry R. Seager "and therefore cannot be classed as propagandist." If allowed to stand, the ruling of the religious advisory committee would have the effect of "muzzling the freedom of discussion at Columbia, a fact wholly inconsistent with the traditions of the university and your own reputation."<sup>16</sup>

Neither Douglas's argument nor his appeals to the traditions of Columbia and to Butler's reputation as a defender of free speech persuaded Butler. Although the club would have a room in Earl Hall for membership meetings, he replied to Douglas, he fully supported the decision of the faculty religious advisory committee allowing use of the auditorium only under the restrictions which applied to all student organizations having "a propagandist or political end in view. The temptation to exploit the University for all sorts of undertakings," he added opaquely, "is very great, and it is the settled policy of the University that it shall not be so exploited...." Douglas persisted. He saw Secretary Fackenthal to determine Butler's real motive and to reach

a compromise, if possible. Fackenthal, who was amiable, told Douglas that the club had been denied permission to hold public meetings because certain speakers who had recently addressed various organizations at Columbia had misrepresented themselves as Columbia faculty members, thereby associating the university with opinions that it might not wish to advocate. Douglas agreed that this danger was real; to avoid it he proposed the creation of a “faculty committee of censorship,” which would screen in advance the speakers invited to address the club. Fackenthal thought the plan had merit and agreed to it tentatively, though not officially. In his reply to Butler, Douglas recounted his conversation with Fackenthal and added with obvious satisfaction that he had approached Harlan F. Stone, dean of the law school, and Professors Beard and Seager, all of whom had agreed to serve on the proposed faculty committee. Replying for Butler, Fackenthal agreed to Douglas’s proposal and congratulated him on securing these prestigious faculty members. But he also insisted on Columbia’s right to modify the plan, should it conflict “with other stated policies of the University” at some future time. Butler, it appears, wished to preserve his freedom of action to deal with the club in case of untoward developments in the war. Meanwhile, however, the future senator had clearly outmaneuvered the formidable Butler and had prevented the crippling of the Socialist Study Club.<sup>17</sup>

As a municipal institution, the College of the City of New York was peculiarly susceptible to outside pressure, and as the preparedness campaign gathered force, CCNY’s Socialist Study Club came under the scrutiny of the college’s board of trustees. As required by the bylaws of the board, in October 1915 the club submitted its proposed constitution to the board for its approval. The constitution provided for affiliation with the ISS; at public meetings, it declared, “men from within or without the College shall speak before the Society, its friends, and visitors.” Worried perhaps about these provisions, the board adopted a resolution requesting the faculty of CCNY to report whether

the Intercollegiate Socialist Society is an organization the purposes or activities of which are in any way not in harmony with ... the

wise policy of the College to keep free from any references to the activities of any political party, and as to whether, in the judgment of the Faculty, the Society should be requested to amend its proposed constitution in any particular, either in name or in purpose.<sup>18</sup>

The faculty investigated and reported to the board that the ISS “is primarily a study and not a propagandist organization,” and the board then voted to approve the constitution as submitted. It stipulated, however, that the club “shall adopt... either the former name, Social Science Study Club, or some such name as Club for the Study of Social Topics, to be approved by the President.” The reason for the change of name was the board’s wish that the club “shall avoid the use of any name which would tend to imply connection with any political party.”<sup>19</sup> Bowing to the board’s mandate, CCNY’s Socialist Study Club changed its name to Social Problems Club.

Early in 1915 the Collegiate Anti-Militarism League was founded at Columbia at a meeting attended mainly by students from large eastern universities. The purpose of the league was to combat the growing campaign to introduce military training courses into the curriculum and induce students to attend military camps.<sup>\*</sup> The league was neither sponsored nor supported by the ISS, and Karl G. Karsten, its president who was a Columbia student, was not a member of the ISS. It appears, however, that some ISS student leaders helped found the league and remained active members. John Temple Graves, president of the Princeton chapter, was the league’s secretary and the ubiquitous Alexander Trachtenberg its treasurer. A few days after the league had been organized, five student leaders at Columbia representing as many organizations sent a resolution to President Wilson protesting against the introduction of summer training camps for college men. Karsten signed on behalf of the Collegiate Anti-Militarism League; Paul Douglas, for the Socialist Study Club.<sup>20</sup> In 1916 and 1917, the league published a few issues of a journal called *War?* Again, among the officers listed on the masthead were active ISS student leaders, including Robert W. Dunn of Yale, Carroll Binder of Harvard, Devere



Allen of Oberlin, Eleanor W. Parker of Barnard, and Charles F. Phillips of Columbia.

In the summer of 1915, Karsten asked Graham Stokes for permission to make a formal presentation of the league's views at the ISS Labor Day conference. Stokes turned down his request as "impracticable" because of the crowded schedule planned for the conference, but he suggested that there might be time for "a few words" from Karsten after the formal presentations when meetings were customarily thrown open for informal discussions. Although Karsten did attend the conference, the record is silent as to whether or not he had an opportunity to deliver his message.<sup>21</sup>

## IV

When war broke out, Laidler, one recalls, suggested that the European socialists were defending their countries against German imperialism or, in the case of the German socialists, against Czarist autocracy. Hillquit, later one of the chief architects of the Socialist party's policy of unyielding opposition to American participation in the war, agreed that socialists had always left open the possibility of supporting their homelands in a defensive war. The European socialists were fighting, he wrote, because they believed their countries were threatened by foreign domination. Those socialists, incidentally, who attempted to justify defensive wars could fall back on the authority of Karl Marx himself. At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, Marx told the General Council of the International Working Men's Association that the war was forced upon Germany by a conspiracy between Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck. "On the German side," he declared, "the war is a war of defence...." And at the conclusion of that war, Marx issued a manifesto to the German working class, explaining that while Louis Napoleon's mercenaries were endangering Germany, it was the plain duty of the workers to fight for the freedom of the



Fatherland. And a defensive war against an aggressor, he asserted, might even include offensive steps.<sup>22</sup>

Granted that European socialists might claim they were fighting in defense of their homelands, could American socialists who favored military preparedness make a similar claim? Even the stoutest proponents of increased armaments among the ISS leadership could hardly maintain that the United States was in imminent danger of foreign invasion. They could and did argue, however, that the United States ought to build the strongest possible army and navy because it might soon be compelled to defend itself against a victorious Germany. They could and did argue further that socialists had a moral obligation to help defend the victims of aggression, even if that meant embracing aggressive war. Graham Stokes, perhaps under the influence of his friend Walling, had been developing these ideas over a period of time. He was well aware that his views on defensive war were those of a minority within the ISS. "My views on the subject of armaments," he confided to a correspondent in the summer of 1916, "by no means appear to be those of a majority of my associates in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, nor of the Society itself." The following month Stokes presented a lengthy paper on the question of defensive war before the second ISS summer conference, which was built around the theme, Social Preparedness: National and International. Even Jesus who preached nonresistance to evil, said Stokes, found it necessary to use violence against the disturbers of the peace. A tyrannical government was at large in the world, strangling the liberties of other nations; any nation that was watching idly without coming to the aid of the victims of aggression did not deserve to retain its own liberties or the respect of other nations. Though freely conceding that the majority of socialists in the United States were strongly opposed to any efforts to strengthen the United States army and navy, he maintained nonetheless that their views were not consistent with those of the most honored leaders of the international socialist movement. To buttress his justification of defensive wars, Stokes quoted extensively from the writings of the most respected leaders of the First and Second International, including Marx, Engels, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Jaurès, Guesde, and even Hillquit

and Berger. He expressed the hope that the position of the minority might soon become that of the majority; but even if this were not to happen, he was satisfied that the evidence he had presented offered convincing proof that

the very great majority of the organized Socialists of the world believe in the propriety of defensive wars, where the liberties of the people are deemed by the people to be at stake; and even in the propriety of aggressive wars where deemed by the people essential to the overthrow of tyranny.<sup>[23](#)</sup>

Walling supported Stokes, of course. Socialists were generally opposed to international wars, he declared, and they even refused to give blanket approval to defensive wars. Once war was declared, however, it was the duty of socialists to support that nation whose victory would best serve the interests of internationalism and democracy. Although the democracies of England, France, and the United States were nowhere near achieving socialism, they nevertheless best served the cause of internationalism and democracy at this juncture. It was, therefore, “worth any sacrifice whatever in blood or money to prevent these [countries] from receiving a set-back in 1917 at the hands of the identical reactionary powers they overthrew in 1648, 1776, 1789 and 1848.” Other conference speakers remained unconvinced of the validity of the arguments advanced by Stokes and Walling. George Nasmyth, director of the World Peace Foundation, reminded the delegates that once a war started, governments invariably attempted to persuade their people that a war of aggression was really a war of defense. He sharply questioned Walling’s claim that an Allied victory would advance the cause of democracy; the war was likely to have precisely the opposite result, and it might even result in the militarization of Europe. In his opinion, the means used in this instance were likely to poison the ends desired. Jessie Wallace Hughan denied that the theory of defensive war was applicable to the United States. At the same time, Miss Hughan revised the classic socialist theory according to which all international wars were the result of rivalry

among capitalist nations seeking sources of raw materials and markets for surplus goods. That theory, she held, could be used only to explain struggles for possession of undeveloped territories and certain international wars between the Franco-Prussian war and 1914. But the war then in progress was caused primarily by each belligerent's fear of the other's armaments and intentions. Since the United States was a highly developed country, no other power would be likely to covet it as a potential outlet for its surplus goods; hence the United States had no need for vast military forces. "An unarmed United States," she concluded, "would be the safest nation that has yet existed."<sup>24</sup>

William P. Montague, professor of philosophy at Barnard College, cautioned the delegates not to underestimate the emotional basis of much of the patriotic feeling abroad in the land, and he urged them to make an effort to understand that feeling. Socialists tended to overemphasize the economic basis of the preparedness campaign and to discount its "sentimental" side. Though he recognized that much of the preparedness movement was indeed economically motivated, he questioned the wisdom of belittling as pure economic self-interest every manifestation of honest patriotism and the desire to serve one's country at a critical time. Socialists, he suggested, should attempt to utilize this noble feeling in the cause of socialism along the lines proposed by William James. As a moral equivalent for war, Montague urged the establishment of "Socialist Plattsburgs," where young men and women would be trained for service to society.<sup>25</sup>

In the last months of American neutrality, prowar socialists, many of them prominent in the ISS, began to issue manifestoes supporting American intervention in the war. Early in 1917 Charles Edward Russell, an early advocate of American preparedness, called for all-out support of the Allied powers. Stokes assured Russell that he had signed the manifesto, though he regretted the necessity of breaking with "the great majority" of party members. "But of course when the majority is so colossally in error," added Stokes who was rarely inclined to doubt the correctness of his own position, "there is nothing to do but break from them." In March 1917 Stokes issued his own prowar manifesto, which was signed by ten other prominent socialists. Four of these—

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William English Walling, Upton Sinclair, and Stokes himself—had signed the call for the organization of the ISS.\* The other signers included W. J. Ghent, Leroy Scott, Robert W. Bruere, and Charles Edward Russell, all of whom had served the ISS either as officers or lecturers. They declared that the present attitude of the Socialist party was “a betrayal of democracy,” and that no nation had the right to refuse to assume its responsibilities “to save itself some present suffering,” or to “bask behind bulwarks raised and defended by others.” The cause of internationalism, they asserted, required opposition to “international crime”; it was the plain duty of socialists to uphold the principles of international law and order “essential alike to Socialism and to civilization.” Ernest Poole, novelist and also a prominent member of the ISS, informed Stokes that he fully agreed with his manifesto and wished to sign it if that were still possible.<sup>26</sup>

At the end of January 1917, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare; a few days later the United States severed diplomatic relations with that country. In mid-March German submarines attacked and sank three homeward-bound American vessels, whereupon President Wilson called a special session of the Congress for April 2. To plan policy for the approaching war, the Socialist party called a special emergency convention to meet in St. Louis on April 7. When the delegates met at the Planters Hotel, America was at war.

## V

The convention appointed a commission on war and militarism and charged it with the responsibility of preparing a statement of policy. The majority report, coauthored by Morris Hillquit, leader of the party’s “conservative” wing, and Charles E. Ruthenberg, leader of its “left” wing, re-affirmed the party’s faith in “the principle of internationalism and working-class solidarity the world over....” The majority report repeated the party’s opposition to capitalist wars and branded the United States’ declaration of war “as a crime against the people of the United

States and against the nations of the world.” A key recommendation of the report—one that was to cost the party dearly—called for “continuous, active and public opposition to the war through demonstrations, mass petitions, and all other means within our power.” The commission’s minority report was submitted by John Spargo, who was its sole signer. Though he agreed that socialists were generally against war and in favor of peace, he strongly denied that they were “peace-at-any-price pacifists.” Spargo, who had vigorously opposed American preparedness at the ISS convention in December 1915, now made a 180-degree turn. Invoking the authority of Marx and Engels, he declared that under certain conditions, wars to safeguard and advance the interests of the working class were justified and could be defended.<sup>27</sup> The convention approved the majority report and, as required by the party’s constitution, submitted it to a referendum of the party membership. Reflecting the militant antiwar feeling of the party, the membership voted overwhelmingly to approve the majority report, which then became the position of the party.

An immediate consequence of the party’s refusal to participate in the war effort was the resignation from the Socialist party, though not from the ISS, of a number of prominent party members. Graham Stokes resigned with his wife “not because we have ceased to be Socialists, but because we have lost faith in the Socialist Party as an effective instrument for advancing the Socialist cause.” Upton Sinclair, who had been a member of the party for sixteen years, left it because he believed the German government was a “wild beast” that needed to be chained. But he also wrote to Stokes that his interest in the ISS was undiminished.<sup>28</sup> In his letter of resignation John Spargo, one of the five members of the party’s national executive committee, denounced the party’s antiwar policy as “un-neutral, un-American, and pro-German.” He declared he remained a socialist and expressed the hope that he would have an opportunity to continue to serve the cause of socialism, referring particularly to his work for the ISS. It would be “foolish” to pretend, he added, that his “British lineage, birth, education, and associations” had never affected his views on the war. Any person making that claim “would have to ignore the vastly important

psychological processes of the subconscious mind.”<sup>29</sup> Spargo’s insight is revealing: most of the important figures who resigned from the party were, like Spargo, of British descent.<sup>\*</sup> But this argument should not be pressed too far. Other prominent socialists, including many members of the ISS executive committee, also came of Anglo-Saxon ancestry; yet, as will be shown, these men and women were and remained opponents of the war. Not surprisingly, the pacifists on the ISS executive committee were never as vehement in their pacifism as were the pro-Allied sympathizers in their support of the war.

For more than two years, while America was still at peace, the ISS avoided making an official pronouncement on the war and preferred to remain silent. But America’s entry into the conflict made further silence impossible. The month following America’s declaration of war, the executive committee adopted a resolution announcing the position of the ISS. The resolution broke no new ground; it merely extended the society’s traditional policy of neutrality to include the Great War. The committee resolved:

That in conformity with the policy of this Society since its foundation, the Executive Committee desire to announce to all interested that the Society’s sole function is to promote an intelligent interest in Socialism, and that it therefore does not consider it consistent with the Society’s objects for the Committee to take a stand either for or against war or for or against any position that is in controversy within the Socialist Party; and therefore neither the Society nor the Committee should be held in any way responsible for the personal views of its members on either side of any such issue or controversy.

Although the ISS would not take a position either for or against the war, the executive committee explained, it would nonetheless attempt, through its lecturers and publications, to bring to the attention of college and alumni chapters significant information concerning the causes of the war and the lessons it taught from a socialist perspective. ISS



lecturers, moreover, would give a fair and impartial exposition of the diverging positions of socialists on the war. Finally, chapters were urged to discuss freely all aspects of the war in order to clarify difficult issues. This course, the executive committee believed, would not embroil the ISS “in useless controversy” and would tend to attract the most alert people.<sup>30</sup>

The course of action charted by the ISS was calculated not to please everyone, but to offend no one. As we shall see, however, while the pacifists were perfectly willing to continue to work with the most rabid prowar members, the latter—especially Stokes, Walling, Spargo, and their friends—became increasingly intolerant of dissenting voices. Walling was one of those who did not hesitate to impute treasonous motives to anti-war socialists. Expressing his distaste for “Kaiserism” and for the party leaders who, he maintained, favored Germany, Walling wrote that “the Socialist Party under its present control is directed from Berlin....” Clearly the antiwar socialists in the ISS were stung by the charges of pro-Germanism hurled at them by Walling and his friends. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Call*, twenty-seven members of the ISS took issue with those “well-known” socialists who, in letters to the press throughout the country, had branded as pro-German certain activities of the Socialist party. Their opposition to war, the twenty-seven declared, was based not on any pro-German sentiment, but on the conviction that principled opposition “to the argument by bullets” would be the best possible preparation for the post-war task of reconciliation and reconstruction. They based their stand on the principle of socialist internationalism and declared that like Karl Liebknecht, they detested Prussianism. They differed from those who had accused them of pro-Germanism “not in loathing the kaiser less, but war more.” Of the twenty-seven signers, seven were members of the ISS executive committee. They were Harry Laidler, Stokes’s sister Helen Phelps Stokes, Evans Clark, Freda Kirchwey, Jessie W. Hughan, Caro Lloyd, and Mary Sanford. Others who signed included Randolph S. Bourne, Max Eastman, Alexander Trachtenberg, Lewis S. Gannett, H.W.L. Dana, and Carroll Binder. Shortly thereafter, Laidler cautioned the readers of the *Call* that the statement issued by him and his



colleagues did not represent the official position of the ISS. They were merely speaking as individuals, for as everybody knew the ISS did not take a position either for or against the war.<sup>31</sup>

Stokes himself was becoming increasingly harsh toward those who disagreed with his views. In a major address at the 1917 ISS summer conference, Stokes admonished the delegates that universal service in national emergencies had always been the duty of the citizen, and he sternly denied the right of pacifists who were willing to serve in some capacity to choose the kind of service they would render the government. War had been declared by the representatives of the people, and the state now had an absolute right to decide where and when individuals were needed. Though some people who considered themselves as internationalists were saying they would defend their own land against an attack, they refused to participate “in the protection and deliverance of another land and of another people.” Free speech in wartime could be circumscribed, he declared; for the right of free speech was granted by the people, and the people “may and should modify” that right as it applied to those who would misuse it contrary to the public welfare in the current emergency. Stokes warned those who might attempt to resist the orders of the government that they would have only themselves to blame “if they be regarded ... as public enemies, and if measures appropriate for use against enemies are brought to bear against them.” He urged true internationalists to offer their services to President Wilson, “the ablest and wisest leader of the whole people available at the present time,” and to be prepared to serve wherever required.\* A young minister named Norman M. Thomas answered Stokes. On behalf of pacifists and conscientious objectors, Thomas upheld the rights of the individual against the claims of the state. He was discouraged to hear universal military service defended by principled radicals and democrats. So long as the capitalist system of exploitation endured, he warned the delegates, universal military service would be a disaster. The ultimate remedy was to abolish capitalism and the discord it created, and to put in its place cooperation among individuals and among nations. Many of those who listened to Stokes and other prowar speakers must have wondered whether they would

soon be branded as public enemies by their government. Nonetheless, a majority of the delegates reached the conclusion that they ought to affirm liberty of conscience against their presumed duty to the present imperfect state.<sup>[32](#)</sup>

## VI

At the beginning of the 1917–18 academic year the ISS reminded its members that the society “is not an anti or promilitarist, anti or pro-war, anti or pro-conscription organization.” Members of the ISS, the statement continued, held “widely varying views on Socialism and war”; and chapters would best serve their common cause if they made a wholehearted effort to include as members all those who were seriously interested in a better understanding of modern social and economic problems, regardless of their political or social views. Among the topics suggested for discussion at study meetings and as subjects for public lectures were the trend toward state socialism in the belligerent countries, the significance of the Russian Revolution that overthrew Czarism, universal service for young men and women, and freedom of speech in time of war. Above all, the members were urged to allow the freest expression of all views and to prohibit “acrimonious personal attacks.”<sup>[33](#)</sup>

Chapter activities declined considerably in the fall of 1917. Many students were drafted or enlisted voluntarily; others were working in war-related industries. Among those who failed to return to college, reported Laidler, were many of the most active chapter members. The secretary of the Beloit chapter, for instance, informed the central office that “all of our officers elected last June are now in the army; we failed to start up last Fall, and the pressure of other activities kept us from doing anything.” Slowly, tales of obstruction by college officials reached the ISS. The University of Michigan chapter, which in the past had been permitted to hold study meetings in a room on campus, reported that “because of the cloud thrown over all Socialist activities

by the war,” the college administration had refused to authorize the use of that room or any other room on campus. The chapter was able to hold “some sort of meetings” only because one of the members had offered the use of her room. The Columbia chapter, led by Frank Tannenbaum, was able to hold public meetings during the war, if the lecturer was acceptable to college officials. Thus in December 1917 John Dewey, who supported the war, spoke on “War and Education” before an audience of almost three hundred. On the other hand, the authorities refused permission to hear A. J. Sack, Director of the Bureau of Information of the Russian Provisional government.<sup>34</sup>

The reports of the delegates at the annual convention in December 1917 left no doubt that some college administrators were using the war emergency to suppress ISS chapters altogether. Dean Richardson of the Brooklyn Law School “has set his foot down hard” on the chapter, reported its delegate. Delegates from Hunter, Boston University, Tufts, and MIT, among others, also reported that the college administration was refusing permission to hold meetings on campus or was putting up obstacles of one kind or another. Other chapters complained that they were experiencing difficulty in securing speakers and in maintaining their ISS affiliation. The CCNY chapter reported that it had been ordered by President Sidney Mezes to cut its ties to the ISS. Among the speakers who had been scheduled by the chapter but were denied permission to speak were Dudley Field Malone, Rose Pastor Stokes, John Haynes Holmes, Scott Nearing, Max Eastman, and Norman Thomas. Laidler advised the delegates to postpone demands for recognition and the right to hold meetings until the end of the war.<sup>35</sup>

The Wisconsin Socialist Study Club aroused the displeasure of the student paper for protesting the banning from the mails of the *Milwaukee Leader* and other socialist publications. The United States Post Office, under the provisions of the Espionage Act, in effect suppressed the *Leader*, edited by ex-Congressman Victor Berger and one of the best known socialist publications in the country, by the simple expedient of revoking its second-class mailing privilege. Earlier that summer about sixty other socialist newspapers had received the same treatment. At a meeting of the membership the Wisconsin chapter

adopted the following resolution protesting the action of the government:

RESOLVED, that we, the Wisconsin Chapter of the Intercollegiate Socialist society, assembled tonight, protest against the act of excluding The Milwaukee Leader and ... other progressive publications from the United States mails by the post office department.

AND FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Wisconsin Inter-collegiate Socialist society, is an opponent of Prussianism in all its forms, and champion of government by public opinion, as against government by militarists, and that we believe that there can be no genuine democracy without freedom of press, speech, and assemblage, urge our government not to prohibit the freedom of press, speech, and assemblage, so long as these do not reveal actual information to our enemies about our army and navy movements.<sup>36</sup>

The student paper reacted sharply. In an editorial entitled "Leaks in Loyalty!" the *Cardinal* condemned the club for protesting the government's attempt to ban "doubtful publications" from the United States mails. Asserting that the club's action misrepresented the feelings of the students in the university, the editorialist recommended that the activities of the club "be checked within reasonable grounds." Noting pointedly that certain "men and papers" were watching the university closely, the paper called for "unflinching, unqualified support of the war...." Support for the paper's stand came from an alumnus who affirmed the loyalty of the "overwhelming majority" of students and alumni who were "enthusiastic supporters" of the government's war policy. It was unfortunate, he wrote, that the public should be given a false impression by the actions of a small group of "disloyal Socialists." At a meeting of the Wisconsin chapter in January 1918, a resolution was introduced affirming the loyalty of the chapter. Action on the resolution was blocked, however, on the ground that such action would violate ISS

policy urging the membership to avoid taking a stand either for or against the war. But all members present at the meeting affirmed their loyalty as individuals.<sup>[37](#)</sup>

Later that year the Socialist Study Club changed its name to Social Science Club. During the past year, the chapter's executive committee announced, there had been much misunderstanding concerning the purpose of the club, and many students had wrongly assumed that the club was a branch of the Socialist party. The club's sole purpose, the executive committee continued, was to study the principles and practices of the various Socialist parties throughout the world and to discuss contemporary economic, social, and political problems. The first meeting of the reorganized chapter was to hear a lecture by Professor E. A. Ross on the problems of social reconstruction after the war; the meeting was to be held as soon as the health officers were ready to lift the ban on meetings imposed because of the influenza epidemic.<sup>[38](#)</sup>

After the war, an officer of the chapter who had entered the university as a freshman in 1915, summed up the experience of the war years. The chapter survived, he wrote, because it adopted and consistently followed a strict non-partisan policy. It "tabooed" discussions that might have forced it either to approve or condemn American participation in the war, thereby avoiding personal clashes that might have resulted in the chapter's untimely demise. Despite outside pressures, particularly from a section of the press which frequently accused the university of having pro-German sympathies, the university administration remained "comparatively tolerant" toward the chapter. The faculty generally did not interfere with its meetings even after America entered the war and it became hazardous to be seen with any publication considered radical, or to be discovered at a meeting even vaguely identified as socialist.<sup>[39](#)</sup>

## VII

In the spring of 1917 Morris Hillquit, one of the chief architects of the St. Louis Manifesto, became anathema to Stokes. In fact, the

prospect of having Hillquit address the delegates at the 1917 convention of the ISS was sufficient to precipitate Stokes's resignation as president of the society. It started with Laidler informing Stokes that the convention committee had unanimously decided to ask Hillquit to address the convention on some innocuous topic unrelated to the war; the topic suggested was "A Socialist View of the City." In his letter of resignation to the ISS executive committee, Stokes expressed regret that he could no longer cooperate with the ISS because of his conviction that he must now stand "unequivocally" with President Wilson in this time of "unparalleled crisis" facing the United States and the whole world. His continued association with the ISS might be interpreted as tacit support of a policy that "aids ... the enemies of democratic civilization." Turning to the invitation extended to Hillquit by "certain of my associates" on the executive committee to address the forthcoming ISS convention, Stokes maintained that Hillquit was compromised in the public mind because of his call for an immediate end to the war—an issue on which Hillquit had campaigned in the New York mayoral election a few weeks before. As to the accomplishments of the ISS, he believed that while some members were still doing valuable work, others were doing harm, and lately, "the harm has outweighed the good." To prove his point, he referred to unspecified actions of certain members of the ISS during the past year which "have done more to discourage collegians and others from taking an intelligent interest in Socialism than can be undone in years to come." These actions, he added, were responsible for the sharp decline in the number of college chapters throughout the country. Although he was leaving the ISS, he expressed the "greatest respect for the sincerity" of those ISS members with whom he then so sharply disagreed.<sup>40</sup>

William English Walling was pleased at the news of Stokes's resignation. He advised Stokes by telegram that it was Stokes's "public duty" to give his "splendid" letter of resignation to the press and to the college authorities in all institutions where the ISS had or had had chapters in the past. He offered to join Stokes in this task and to secure the assistance of others as well. Several members of the executive committee disagreed with Walling. Professor William P. Montague of



Barnard, a strong supporter of the war, pleaded with Stokes to remain in the ISS. He agreed with Stokes that the anti-war stand of the Socialist party was doing harm to the democratic cause, but he reminded him that by remaining in the ISS he had an opportunity “to mitigate the harm done to social democracy.” The ISS, he asserted, was one of the branches of the socialist movement which, unlike the Socialist party, had not been compromised by “pacifist acquiescence” in Germany’s war aims. Moreover, the antiwar members of the executive committee had stated repeatedly that they had no desire to impose their own views on the society. Finally, Montague expressed surprise at Stokes’s violent reaction to the convention committee’s invitation to Hillquit. Surely, Stokes would not wish to deny a forum to an opposing view, and he could not possibly believe that their side was so weak that they had to fear an opponent who disagreed with them. If Stokes resigned, Montague concluded, he will have voluntarily surrendered “the one remaining stronghold of socialism in America which is as yet not committed [*sic*] to an anti-war policy.” Nicholas Kelley, another pro war member of the executive committee, implored Stokes “not [to] throw the I.S.S. to the dogs. If either side captures it or if either side throws it up so that it falls to the other,” he warned, “it is done for.” This ought to be prevented at all costs, for after the war the ISS would be “the best instrument for liberalism in our public life.” Since Stokes’s position on the war was widely known, nobody could possibly believe that he was backing Hillquit. Moreover, the fact that he was president of the ISS clearly demonstrated that Hillquit did not control the organization. But if Stokes were to leave, the public would assume that the ISS had been “captured.”<sup>41</sup> Stokes’s replies to Montague and Kelley were negative. He told the first that he was not surrendering any bastion of socialism since he could not agree with Montague’s estimate that the ISS was a “stronghold” of the socialist movement. In his letter to Kelley, Stokes added that the members of the executive committee failed to realize the intensity of his feelings about the war.<sup>42</sup>

Laidler, too, urged Stokes to reconsider. He defended the invitation to Hillquit on the ground that support of free speech had always been a cornerstone of ISS policy, and he reminded Stokes that in the past the



ISS had never hesitated to welcome speakers of widely differing views without expressing either approval or disapproval of their views. Laidler denied that the pacifist members of the executive committee were somehow responsible for the drop in the number of college chapters. The attrition, it seemed to him, was due largely to the war and the negative attitude of college authorities resulting therefrom; to a lesser degree, it was also due to more stringent pruning of inactive chapters by the central office. It was true that in a few places, especially some of the smaller colleges of the Midwest, some chapters had suffered because the ISS was regarded as a pacifist organization. On the other hand, because of the prowar stand of such prominent ISS figures as Stokes, Walling, Spargo, and Rose Pastor Stokes, whose defection from the Socialist party had been widely publicized in the press of the country, the ISS was often looked upon as a prowar organization. On his recent trip, Laidler added, he had in fact been asked in various places whether it was true that the ISS had become a supporter of the war. At first Stokes refused to reconsider and indeed reaffirmed his decision to resign. His unwillingness to provide a forum for Hillquit, he maintained in all seriousness, was not a denial of free speech. Though it was perfectly legitimate to tolerate opinions that one believed to be harmful, it was quite another matter to furnish a platform and ready-made audiences, "for those whose propaganda one considers pernicious and seriously menacing to the democratic cause, and whose person one neither honors, trusts nor respects." But if the majority of the executive committee desired to provide a platform for Hillquit, he would not interfere but could not take part in welcoming him. Nevertheless a few days later Stokes, after a long talk with Spargo and Boudin,<sup>\*</sup> yielded to the request of a unanimous executive committee and agreed to remain in the ISS "for the present at least...."<sup>43</sup>

Shortly after Stokes's reelection as president of the ISS in April 1918, Laidler asked him to appoint the subcommittees previously authorized by the executive committee. Stokes complied, accepting Laidler's suggestions concerning the membership of the various subcommittees. Laidler made a strenuous effort to balance prowar and antiwar members, but he was unable to achieve perfect equilibrium, simply

because the pacifists on the committee outnumbered the prowar members. When Spargo received the committee assignments, he complained to Laidler that the committees had entirely too many antiwar members. He specifically mentioned the committee on speakers whose members, including Norman Thomas, were opposed to the war. "Why not go over bodily to the latest Roger Baldwin-Norman Thomas combination?" Spargo inquired caustically. Laidler replied that he had assigned the prowar members to as many committees as they cared to serve on, and that it was nearly impossible to balance prowar and antiwar members on every single committee. In any event, Laidler added, regardless of their personal convictions on the war, every member of the executive committee, except perhaps one or two, was determined that the ISS remain a non-partisan organization. Perhaps hoping to placate Spargo, Laidler added that the committees had been appointed by Stokes himself. And exasperated by the need to engage in delicate balancing acts, Laidler asked Stokes to review the committee assignments in light of Spargo's criticism.<sup>44</sup> Stokes seemingly did not reply.

Although Stokes continued to serve as president of the ISS during the spring of 1918, he was no longer active in the organization. He withdrew from committee work and was unavailable for consultation when Laidler needed his advice. Suddenly, in the summer of 1918, he submitted his second and final resignation from the presidency of the ISS, its executive committee, and its membership. "I have come increasingly to feel," he informed Laidler, "that the present views and aims of the controlling element in the Executive Committee are too much at variance with my own to justify my continuing to occupy a position of responsibility within the Society...." To underscore the irreversibility of his decision, he requested Laidler to order new stationery immediately, omitting Stokes's name from the list of officers, and to erase his name from letterheads that had to be used in the meantime. Correct to the end, Stokes offered to pay for any old letterheads that had to be destroyed. Once again Laidler attempted to dissuade Stokes. In a long account of the activities of the ISS during the preceding spring, he reiterated that the society had attempted to be

“scrupulously careful” to stick to its original purpose. For financial reasons the usual lecture trips had to be curtailed sharply and he had in fact been the only lecturer under ISS auspices. To give added force to his appeal, Laidler reminded Stokes that, except for himself, Stokes was the only other member of the executive committee who had served on it continuously from the beginning of the society in 1905. Laidler’s efforts were in vain, and Stokes seemingly did not bother to reply. One month after he had resigned, however, he wondered why his name still appeared on the program for the ISS autumn conference, and he again asked Laidler to order new stationery and erase his name from any old stationery still in use. More important, he insisted that the ISS choose a new president without delay so as to avoid giving the membership the impression that he was still serving in that office.<sup>45</sup>

Norman Thomas too asked Stokes to reconsider his decision. Aware that his name on the program as a speaker at the forthcoming autumn conference had irritated Stokes, Thomas offered to remove himself if that would help. Although he admitted frankly that he and Stokes differed decidedly on such issues as freedom of speech in time of war and conscientious objection, he nonetheless expressed appreciation of Stokes’s past service to the cause of democracy and to the ISS, an organization which made it possible for people holding divergent views on many questions to cooperate fully on the common task. By then, Stokes’s position had hardened into a dogma, and he was no longer willing to tolerate dissent. Though expressing appreciation of the “generous spirit” of Thomas’s letter, he wrote that he could no longer aid in providing a forum for those who were obstructing the democratic cause. He again denied the right to absolute freedom of speech in time of war, maintaining that there was greater danger to the democracies in tolerating dissent than in restraining the liberty of individuals.<sup>46</sup>

Having made his final break with the ISS, Stokes seemingly felt compelled to persuade his friends to follow his lead. One of those contacted by Stokes was novelist Ernest Poole who, after “thinking it over,” informed Stokes that he had decided to resign as second vice president of the ISS and from the executive committee. Stokes also cabled Spargo, announcing that Walling, Poole, and he had left the

ISS.<sup>47</sup> Shortly after Stokes's resignation in the summer of 1918, Florence Kelley took over as acting president of the ISS. In the fall of that year she assumed the presidency, marking the beginning of a new phase in the existence of the ISS.

## VIII

It is difficult to document the extent of interference with chapter activities by the college authorities during the war. Such interference varied from one institution to another, depending on local traditions, the ingenuity of chapters, and the degree of external pressure on the institutions themselves. What is certain is that the activities of almost all chapters were curtailed sharply and that an unknown number of chapters were suppressed. In contrast the ISS itself suffered comparatively little harassment from the federal authorities. While almost all publications of the Socialist party were banned from the mails, only two issues of the *Intercollegiate Socialist* were held up by the post office for varying periods. Expressing surprise at the action of the authorities, Laidler explained that the ISS had been careful not to offend the "illiberal" Post Office Department, unless a discussion of peace terms could be considered offensive. In May 1918 a mailing to college chapters of Norman Angell's "Why Freedom Matters," a plea for freedom of speech and press in time of war, was also held up by the post office. Not until the following November was the ISS notified by the New York Postmaster that Washington had decided the pamphlet was nonmailable and that it had been destroyed. Except for these instances, reported Laidler, "there has been little interference with the Society's publications."<sup>48</sup> Very likely, the ISS was spared the treatment accorded the Socialist party because of the well-known zeal for the Allied cause of such leading ISS figures as Stokes, Walling, Spargo, and Poole. The last, incidentally, signed up as director of the foreign press bureau of George Creel's Committee on Public Information. In the American hinterland, college officials and local patriots may have regarded the

ISS as irremediably pacifist; in New York and Washington, government officials whose business it was to know had no such illusions. These officials may have experienced moments of unease about the pacifist proclivities of Norman Thomas, John Haynes Holmes, Jessie Wallace Hughan, or some other pacifists on the ISS executive committee; but they were perfectly aware that the ISS did not interfere in any way with the prosecution of the war. And although the society's quarterly published some contributions by pacifists, it also printed forceful arguments for American preparedness and support of the war, including several by Stokes himself.

There is no evidence that ISS student members participated in the internal feuds that divided their elders after America entered the European conflict. Those chapters that continued to function during the war generally observed the strictures of the ISS executive committee against taking a stand either for or against American involvement. Privately, many student members undoubtedly continued to oppose American intervention; many others, though perhaps troubled, were swept up in the wave of high-minded patriotism that submerged the campuses after April 1917. The call of the national leadership for a crusade to make the world safe for democracy probably proved irresistible to student members of the ISS, as indeed it did to their fellow students. Besides, with some notable exceptions the American professoriate, including some of its most distinguished representatives, led the way in supporting the crusade.\*

The ability of the ISS to facilitate the study of socialism in colleges and universities, a task the society always regarded as its primary mission, was seriously undermined by the war. Perhaps unwittingly, Laidler himself hinted at this development after his trip to some of the midwestern colleges in the spring of 1918. "Temporarily," he reported, "undergraduate organization has been somewhat retarded...." Among the reasons he gave for the setback were the uncertainties of the draft, the demands on students to participate in military activities, the problem of obtaining suitable meeting places, and "the issue of patriotism...."<sup>49</sup> The war came to an end, and so did the draft and the pressure on students to sign up for military courses and other activities related to the

war. What was not resolved was the issue of patriotism, and it was this issue that was to haunt the ISS in the postwar years.

## Notes

\* American socialists, who had largely ignored foreign affairs before the war, were in good company. While making plans for *The New Republic*, Herbert Croly and his staff “had discussed domestic issues in infinite detail. They had scarcely mentioned foreign policy.” Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, p. 233.

\* W. J. Ghent, prominent socialist writer and a former secretary of the ISS, also imputed to European socialists the kind of omnipotence they might have wished to possess. The European socialists, he asserted flatly, “could have prevented or stopped the war,” Since they had done neither, they fully deserved the “male-dictions” being hurled at them. “Socialism Should Have Prevented the War,” *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 6–8.

\* A contemporary observer confirmed that military training for students in summer camps had won the support of the presidents “of some of the leading universities, who have formed an advisory committee.” He noted further that the presidents of many other institutions who were not members of the committee “have given the plan their hearty endorsement....” See John Lovejoy Elliott, *University Presidents and the Spirit of Militarism in the United States* (n.p., 1915), p. 4.

\* An assessment of the attitudes of students generally toward the preparedness campaign is beyond the scope of this study, but it appears that a remarkable shift occurred during the first year of the European war. An examination of student newspapers at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and CCNY suggests that there was widespread opposition to military preparedness and American involvement in the war during the 1914–15 academic year. By the fall of 1915, however, these papers generally supported military training in the colleges, the introduction of military courses into the curriculum, and attendance of students at the Plattsburg summer camp. Very likely, by the fall of 1915 the college press reflected and to some extent anticipated the shift in student sentiment from hostility or indifference to the war to more or less wholehearted support.

\* Sinclair never joined Stokes and Walling in their attempt to justify defensive wars. His support of the Allied cause was based purely on fear of a German victory. If he were to conclude, Sinclair wrote to Stokes, that Germany would win the war, he would “consider it [his] duty to drop all thought of Socialism and Social Reform and devote what little influence I possess to help in awakening America for the final struggle on behalf of Democracy.” Feb. 8, 1916, JSP.

\* A contemporary observer also traced the instinctive support for Great Britain to the English origin of most Americans. Noting the adverse American reaction to Germany’s invasion of neutral Belgium, he wrote that “our anger arises ... because we are still chiefly of British descent, that we therefore look upon events with much of British astigmatism, minimizing the wounds which the British inflict, magnifying those things which hurt Great Britain.” Harry

Emerson Wildes, "Socialist Participation in the World War," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 14 (July 1915), 243.

\* Some prowar socialists and liberals thought that by supporting the administration they would be in a position to influence the direction of the war and the trend of postwar developments. Even the sober, pragmatic Walter Lippmann seemingly was carried away by a vision of a capitalism transformed by the exigencies of the war. The United States, he wrote to Stokes shortly after the country had entered the conflict, was ready for "a collectivism which is greater than any as yet planned by the Socialist Party." The war, he declared confidently, "has really carried already beyond the stage of merely national socialism." Letter to Stokes, May 1, 1917, JSP.

\* Like Spargo, Boudin, one recalls, was the author of a minority report at the St. Louis Convention of the Socialist party. Whereas Spargo's report was strongly prowar, Boudin's report essentially took the same antiwar position as did Hillquit's majority report, differing only in omitting recommendations for dealing with the crisis. Since Boudin shared Stokes's animus toward Hillquit, it is possible that Stokes was willing to overlook Boudin's antiwar stand.

\* Alexander Trachtenberg and Paul Douglas, both a few years out of graduate school at the time, represented the contradictory tendencies of ISS students. The first remained opposed to the war, and the last attempted to enlist but was rejected because of poor eyesight. Support of the war by the academic profession has been documented by Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War One and the Uses of the Higher Learning in America* (Baton Rouge, La., 1975).



## 7

# “Enemies of the Republic”

With characteristic optimism the ISS greeted the end of the war as an opportunity for a new beginning. Regular chapter activities, the society confidently expected, would be resumed and college men and women would again take up the study of socialism—the master key to an understanding of the modern world. In the first glow of the postwar months Harry Laidler, the society’s ebullient secretary, expected that students would soon return to the campus in greater numbers and that a speedy “demilitarization” of the college curriculum would follow shortly. Undoubtedly reflecting the mood of the executive committee, Laidler discerned “a great reawakening” of interest in the problems of social reconstruction. In keeping with this mood the ISS, in an appeal to potential contributors, announced bravely that it planned to enlarge its work now that peace had come. Among other projects, the executive committee was planning to convert the society’s quarterly to a monthly, to be named the *Socialist Review*.<sup>1</sup>

Even before the conflict ended, the national office took tentative steps to determine the status of chapters on wartime campuses and plan for the resumption of work after the war. The ISS was, of course, aware that because of the draft and voluntary enlistments, enrollments had been drastically reduced, and that almost all extracurricular activities had been suspended in the men’s colleges. Nevertheless early in the 1918 spring semester, Laidler attempted to contact ISS chapter officers he had known before. “Will you kindly let us know,” he inquired, “whether or not the old I.S.S. chapter is still flourishing at your college, and if not, whether you can assist in reorganizing the group.” Because of the war

and the problems created by it, he continued, the challenge of socialism could not be ignored; it was more urgent than ever for college men and women to take an intelligent interest in studying its philosophy. "A group organized at this time," Laidler concluded wistfully, "would, therefore, fill a great need."<sup>2</sup>

Laidler's optimistic expectation that normalcy would soon return to the campus proved to be premature. As he himself was to discover, conditions in the colleges at the beginning of the 1918 fall semester were hardly conducive to fruitful organizing. Military courses proliferated, units of the Students' Army Training Corps (SATC) were established in the colleges, and many institutions of higher education were transformed into military camps. And after a four-week trip in the spring of 1919, Laidler reported to the executive committee that war patriotism, though receding slowly in some places, was still much in evidence. Radical and liberal students believed it would be unwise to attempt to reorganize old chapters or start new groups in the prevailing climate. Laidler recommended, therefore, that the ISS postpone organizational work until the fall when more favorable conditions could be expected. In the near hysteria of the early postwar period, accusations of laxity in backing the nation's recent war effort were flung indiscriminately at individuals and groups. In one case, the ISS was linked directly to a number of persons whose loyalty was questioned. A U.S. Senate committee investigating the extent of German propaganda during the war received from the Intelligence Division of the War Department a list of sixty-two persons who were alleged to have engaged in disloyal activities; among these were a number of professors who, it was implied, were members of the ISS. On behalf of the ISS, Laidler protested against the use of the society's name in connection with these professors. Most of them, he wired the Senate committee, merely endorsed the purpose of the ISS and had no other connection with the organization.<sup>3</sup>

The ISS, it soon became clear, was facing formidable obstacles. Reports from some of the colleges had a tentative quality and did not convey a sense of purposeful activity. The Yale chapter which, "owing to conditions in the University," had suspended activities during the

war, reported merely that Yale was ready “to benefit by the existence of a radical organization. With competent speakers,” the report continued, “we could do a great deal in real constructive work....” The Columbia chapter did not reorganize until the spring of 1919; even then it reported little organized activity and limited itself to issuing an appeal to Columbia students to join the chapter regardless of whether they were “for, against, or indifferent to Socialism....” The following year, some students organized the Columbia Forum for the purpose of studying contemporary problems. Jessica Smith, the executive secretary of the ISS who was present at the organizing meeting, invited the Forum to affiliate with the ISS but was turned down. Nonetheless, the Yale and Columbia chapters were functioning, even if weakened by war. In contrast, other chapters were experiencing more serious difficulties. Josephine Newell wrote that her group at the University of Illinois had not yet reorganized because it had proven impossible to obtain a suitable meeting place. At Hunter College, reported Laidler, the college administration first refused to permit the chapter to affiliate with the ISS and then suppressed it altogether. Laidler investigated and found that among the reasons given by the authorities for abolishing the club were that President George S. Davis “has been confronted with much trouble ... in getting certain appropriations from the city ... [and] that several of the girls’ parents have objected to its influence....” At Harvard the ISS found evidence that psychological terror had been used against the chapter. Some students opposed to socialism organized “a reactionary group” which entered and searched the room of a member of the Harvard Socialist Club and destroyed his collection of literature on the Lawrence strike of 1912. The Harvard chapter, incidentally, in cooperation with other students, organized a group “broader than the ISS chapter.” The new group decided not to affiliate with the ISS at the time, though members were free to join the ISS as individuals. In addition, the group sought ISS cooperation in providing speakers.<sup>4</sup>

Like many other ISS chapters, the Barnard Socialist Club also discovered during the war that identification with an organization bearing the socialist label had become a distinct liability. But when the club, in the final days of the war, petitioned the student council for

permission to change its name to the Social Science Club, it was required publicly to affirm its wholehearted support of President Wilson and his conduct of the war. At first the council approved the request and, owing perhaps to the influence of Professor William P. Montague who was a member of the ISS executive committee, the council resolved to allow the new club to retain its affiliation with the ISS. A few days later, however, the chairman of the student council announced that Dean Virginia Gildersleeve would approve the council's resolution, provided that the club "take a stand on the War." The chairman added that the Social Science Club objected to the amendment because of its vagueness; but the council, seemingly bowing to pressure from the dean, reversed itself and voted to recommend affiliation with the ISS only if the club came out in support of the war. To retain its affiliation with the ISS, the club passed a resolution affirming that its members "support the President and the Administration in regard to the successful prosecution of the war." But at the same time the club went on record

as protesting against the above mentioned recommendation, not out of any lack of loyalty on the part of its members, either individually or collectively, but because the Social Science Club has always maintained the attitude of a non-partisan and non-propaganda organization.

As a study group, the protest continued, the club had always encouraged the widest expression of opinion. This attitude, the members firmly believed, was "absolutely essential for clear, unbiased, and intelligent discussion," and the club maintained, therefore, "that it has nothing to gain by taking a written formal stand on the subject of the war." Although the club was aware that the student council's recommendation certainly was "within the letter of the law," it believed, nonetheless, that the recommendation "is not exactly compatible with the spirit of self-government."<sup>5</sup>

The following year the name of the Barnard Social Science Club was changed twice more. The club merged, first, with the Barnard Polity League to form the American Council of Young Women. In an editorial

in the college paper entitled “Le Roi est Mort—Vive Le Roi,” the editor explained that the club decided to make common cause with the Polity League because it recognized that Barnard students did not have an excess of energy for contemporary problems. Seemingly dissatisfied with the new name which vaguely suggested some kind of “international affiliation,” the group again changed its name to the Social and Political Discussion Club. For the first time since the club had been organized more than ten years before, active membership was restricted to students majoring in history or economics, or to students who had taken an elective in either of those subjects beyond the basic courses.<sup>6</sup>

## II

In the fall of 1919 the ISS initiated a questionnaire survey of institutions of higher education throughout the country to determine the extent of interference with freedom of discussion. The results were ominous. Based on replies from students and professors in more than sixty institutions, the ISS concluded that although there existed little or no formal machinery to stifle free discussion, one could discern a more subtle and pervasive climate of repression. There was no blinking the fact that

college students, faculties, and trustees have, in an alarming number of instances, absorbed the general hysteria prevailing at present, and exert a pressure against organizations that consider unorthodox economic views.

A further blow to ISS prospects was the finding that in the prevailing hysteria it would be difficult to send speakers whom the press had branded as “social agitators” to address large groups of college students.<sup>7</sup>

For the benefit of the executive committee, Laidler spelled out the tactics used by college authorities against students wishing to form study groups. First, there could be an outright prohibition against the organization of a chapter. Or, if the college did grant permission to form a chapter, it could deny the chapter's right to affiliate with the ISS. Finally, a college administration could sanction the organization of "a more conservative group" or a group led by some conservative professor to drain away support from those students preferring a socialist study group. "The students and radical members of the faculties," Laidler told the executive committee, "can do no more than they [have] done in the past." To underline the seriousness of the situation, Laidler urged the committee to send at least three or four speakers to the colleges for several weeks each. This was essential, he warned, "if we are going to keep the ... undergraduate chapters alive."<sup>8</sup>

The pressures on chapters and on students wishing to organize or revive study groups were proving effective. At the annual convention in December 1919, the ISS reported that only 17 college chapters were in existence; of these, 6 were unaffiliated. Nine additional chapters, the ISS hoped, would soon be reorganized.\* It was, nevertheless, a far cry from those halcyon days of 1916 when more than 70 chapters had been active. Moreover, delegate after delegate reported restrictions on chapters of one kind or another. The delegate from the University of California at Berkeley stated that the faculty was increasingly hostile to the chapter. Recently a group of students organized the Berkeley Defense Corps, which strongly opposed the chapter and its activities. Reflecting the hostility of faculty and students, the college administration refused permission to the chapter to hear a number of speakers, including Upton Sinclair and Scott Nearing. At the University of Michigan some students, "organized in a Marine Corps," adopted a resolution condemning radicalism and attempted to disrupt chapter meetings. At the University of Pennsylvania, the administration withheld permission for lectures by James H. Maurer, head of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor and a prominent socialist, and Samuel Gompers, president of the AFL and a vociferous opponent of socialism. The Social Problems Club of CCNY reported it had practically



exhausted the list of speakers approved by college officials, and that the members were concerned about the club's program the following spring. Among the speakers blacklisted by the administration were W.E.B. Du Bois, Oswald Garrison Villard, Ordway Tead, James Weldon Johnson, Norman Thomas, Max Eastman, Will Durant, Scott Nearing, and Frederick C. Howe.<sup>2</sup>

In many ways, then, the 1919 convention of the ISS was not a happy occasion for the delegates. The number of chapters had declined drastically and was lower than at any time since 1910.\* The delegates heard reports of harassment and intimidation by college officials and fellow students and of the relentless struggle to hear speakers selected by the chapters. And for the first time in the society's history the convention sessions were closed, suggesting a level of insecurity unknown in the past. There was little discussion about chapter organization or methods of attracting potential members, topics of prime importance at earlier conventions. New concerns were voiced instead. Florence Kelley, who had succeeded Graham Stokes as president of the ISS, asked how institutions of higher education invested their endowments. This subject, said Mrs. Kelley, a lifelong fighter for the protection of working women and children, needed to be illuminated so as to let the public know whether endowments were being used to exploit women and children in cotton mills and elsewhere. There were new faces at the sessions. William Z. Foster, then an organizer of iron and steel workers; Roger Baldwin, head of the Civil Liberties Bureau which later became the American Civil Liberties Union; and Joseph D. Cannon, an AFL official, participated in a discussion on the struggle of labor to organize against the determined opposition of employers. John Spargo, who had resigned from the Socialist party in 1917 but had remained a member of the ISS executive committee throughout 1918, did not attend the convention. When Spargo was invited to continue to serve on the committee in February 1919, he advised Laidler that, much as he would like to resume his work for the ISS, he felt this was impossible because "the point of contact is lacking." The following year, Rose Pastor Stokes, with Spargo one of the most popular speakers in the ISS, also resigned. Laidler's attempt to dissuade her was



unsuccessful.<sup>10</sup> Unlike Spargo, who was turning conservative, Mrs. Stokes was becoming increasingly radical.

Contrary to expectations nurtured since the end of the war, college life did not return to normal in 1920. In the spring of that year Laidler surveyed the status of college chapters in New England and the Middle West. He reported that “a considerable amount of war hysteria still exists, and that it will take some time for things to settle down to normal.” Although liberal and radical students wanted to know about recent developments in the socialist and labor movements, they believed that the present was not a propitious time to start college chapters. But with an optimism born of devout belief and assiduous practice, Laidler again expected a changed climate in the fall and, with it, a better opportunity to send speakers to the colleges and resurrect chapters.<sup>11</sup>

### III

American socialists greeted the Bolshevik Revolution as the long-awaited uprising of the working class, and the defense of the workers’ republic was considered to be the first duty of every socialist. “From November 7, 1917,” writes James Weinstein, “almost all Party members and organs praised the Russians for what they had achieved.”<sup>12</sup> All tendencies in the Socialist party—from Eugene Debs on the “left” to Victor Berger on the “right”—were united in the belief that the first socialist state had to be defended against the forces of world imperialism which were determined to destroy it. Russia and the Russian people were seen as the standard bearers of social democracy and liberty in the worldwide struggle for freedom against imperialist oppression.

The ISS neither supported nor opposed the new Russian government, but it did provide a forum—perhaps the only remaining one—where socialists and liberals could freely discuss the meaning of the Soviet experiment. At first the ISS took no official notice of the Bolshevik Revolution; at the convention in December 1917, that momentous event

was ignored altogether, except for a letter read on behalf of the absent Rose Pastor Stokes who urged the delegates to support the fledgling government. At the following convention held at the end of 1918, however, the political situation in Russia was debated at length. The Reverend Albert Rhys Williams reminded the delegates of the difficulties faced by the young Soviet regime, imperiled as it was by civil war and military intervention by the Allied powers. He urged forbearance for the mistakes of the regime and declared that a speedy end to intervention would help to make Russia and the whole world “safe for democracy.” Norman Thomas excoriated American liberals for their failure to protest against wartime suppression of free speech and press, and for tolerating American intervention in Russia. Jessie W. Hughan, a member of the society’s executive committee since 1907, expressed reservations about the practice of Bolshevism that would soon be shared by many other socialists. Social revolution, she told the delegates, was sweeping the world. Would it come, she asked, through “a tyrannical state socialism” as in Germany or, as in Russia, through “a dictatorship of the proletariat,” which inevitably brings on counterrevolution and terror on both sides? Or would the social revolution come through the growth of the socialist political movement, which would strengthen political and industrial democracy and steer clear of state socialism—a movement, in short, “without violence or counterrevolution or dictatorship of anyone, which scorns victory till it shall rest upon the will of the majority?” Miss Hughan urged the delegates to choose the second alternative and to work for its realization by helping to build the political strength of the socialist movement.<sup>13</sup>

At the ISS conference the following summer, the debate continued. Several speakers expressed the view that the Bolshevik dictatorship was a temporary phenomenon, adopted by the Bolsheviks because of the determined opposition and systematic sabotage by partisans of the old regime. Others, including most prominently Norman Thomas and Gregory Zilboorg, a former official in the Kerensky government, condemned the tactics of the Bolsheviks. Though the Bolsheviks were wrong in not adopting the “ethical means” appropriate to their goals, Zilboorg concluded that in the contest between the Bolsheviks and

Admiral Kolchak a socialist had no choice other than to side with the Soviet government. Norman Thomas also expressed misgivings about some aspects of Bolshevik theory and practice. He added, however, that instead of aiding “corrupt dictators” like Kolchak and Mannerheim, the United States should have helped the Russian people who were engaged in “an experiment of extraordinary interest.” The United States and its allies should have carefully observed this experiment so as to learn important lessons for the coming social transformation. At another conference the following year, a group of recent travelers to Russia presented accounts that on the whole were favorable to the regime. They included Captain W. W. Pettit, who had been attached to the Bullitt mission; Griffin Barry, a correspondent for the London *Daily Herald*; and Albert F. Coyle, a YMCA worker. Other speakers, most notably Dr. S. Ingerman, a former member of the Russian Social Democratic Party, sharply attacked the Bolsheviks for suppressing democracy.<sup>14</sup>

One looks in vain for the views of ISS student members on the Bolshevik Revolution and its possible meaning for the future development of the socialist movement. As noted earlier, college chapters were in decline and regular contact between the central office and the chapters was no longer possible. With one exception, there is no evidence that the ISS attempted to send speakers to the colleges to acquaint students with the situation in Russia. The exception was Wilfred Humphries, a Red Cross and YMCA worker who had helped to distribute to the Russian people one million copies of Wilson’s 14 points. Upon her return to the United States, Miss Humphries toured a number of eastern colleges where she lectured and presented slides on her eleven months in Soviet Russia.

The opponents of socialism seized upon the early support of socialists for the Soviet government to intensify their attacks on socialists and radicals of all persuasions. Weakened by opposition to war and the subsequent split in the American Socialist party triggered by the Bolshevik Revolution, socialists became an easy target during the Red Scare of the postwar years. Although the ISS had not taken a firm position either on the war or the Bolshevik Revolution, it too could not escape being linked with the Socialist party and support for Bolshevism.

There was irony in the fact that the assault on the society which started in 1920 came at precisely the moment when it was weakest. Rewriting history, the Lusk Committee, established by the New York State Legislature to investigate seditious activities, asserted that the ISS, shortly after its founding, had changed its policy to “open advocacy of, instead of merely interest in, Socialism.” The ISS, the committee noted darkly, “publishes pamphlets and books, and directs in a systematic way, the Socialist propaganda among students and graduates, collaborating with the socialistically inclined members of the faculties.” The Better America Federation of California published a tract by one Woodworth Clum, addressed to “American mothers and fathers” whose sons and daughters were in college and to “business men who own property.” The ISS, Clum warned, was nothing less than a conspiracy to subvert American institutions from within. He confided that the plot was hatched by “The Committee of 48” at the 1919 summer conference of the ISS, a committee which clearly bore the mark of “Lenin’s thumbprint....” According to information in his possession, the society had “some 11,000” members; about 2,000 of these were faculty members in colleges and universities. Clum was convinced that the ISS “has assumed leadership in endeavoring to co-ordinate the campaign of the Russian Soviets, the I.W.W.’s, the Communists and practically all the other extreme radicals in this country....” He appealed to all “right-minded Americans” to band together in order to save America from those plotting to destroy her.<sup>15</sup>

The National Association for Constitutional Government mixed crude anti-Semitism with its charge of subversion. The Association warned that the ISS, “with the approbation of certain professors,” aimed at “the subversion of our constitutional system of government,” and that it was indoctrinating our college youth with “nothing less than Marxian revolutionary communism....” Since young men and women tended to be idealistic but immature, they were easy prey for ISS propaganda. Regrettably, some students were favorably inclined toward socialist doctrine because of “the matter of racial predisposition....” Lest any of his readers had missed the point, the author invited them to look closely at the names of the students at Boston University who had recently been

granted an ISS charter. All of the names, except perhaps one or two, appeared to be Jewish. The author also warned his readers not to be taken in by the attempt to distinguish between socialism and communism. The distinction, he maintained, was merely semantic, for socialism of any stripe “is only bolshevism with a clean shave and a haircut.” Anti-Semitism also figured conspicuously in an attack on the Social Science Club of the University of Wisconsin by Joseph W. Jackson, director of the Jackson Clinic in Madison and local chairman of the Committee on American Ideals of the National Chamber of Commerce. The Wisconsin chapter was then reported to have a membership of 115, including student and faculty members, making it by far the largest of all ISS college affiliates and thus an inviting target for its enemies.\* Jackson informed Wisconsin President Edward A. Birge that, having completed “a fairly thorough and unprejudiced survey” of the city of Madison, the committee he headed had concluded unanimously that the Social Science Club presented “the one real Americanization problem” of Madison. Among the club’s faculty members were several who were widely believed to be “leaders of so-called advance thought, semi-advocates of discontent, parlor Bolsheviks, and pro-German, or near patriots.” The club’s student membership, he alleged, included “an increasing number of East side Russian Jews, with Socialistic or even stronger anti-government leanings.” Although its stated purpose was to study socialism, the club in fact advocated and practiced it. Jackson urged Birge to make “a fair, just and fearless disposition” of the matter.<sup>16</sup>

In the spring of 1921, the Committee on Colleges and Universities of the National Security League announced the results of a survey of the presidents of 38 colleges and universities in which, according to the league, the ISS claimed to have chapters. According to Dr. William Bradley Otis, chairman of the committee, 34 presidents replied; of these, 20 stated that no chapter existed in their institutions. But 8 “important” universities had chapters, the majority of which were affiliated with the ISS. Commenting on the results of the survey, Otis asserted that some of the presidents might have minimized the role of ISS chapters at their institutions in order to avoid unfavorable publicity.

In a related development, the National Security League also announced that it would attempt to organize a branch in every institution of higher education in which the ISS was active, “openly or surreptitiously.” The socialists, charged Charles D. Orth, the league’s president, were undermining Americanism in attempting “to implant their Utopian theories in the immature minds” of our college men and women. “Institutions of learning,” Orth declared in what was surely a novel explication of the purposes of higher education, “are established primarily for the dissemination of knowledge, which is acquaintance with fact and not with theory.”<sup>17</sup>

In the summer of 1921 Vice President Calvin Coolidge joined the attack against the ISS. In an article published in a national magazine and suggestively titled “Enemies of the Republic: Are the ‘Reds’ Stalking our College Women?” Coolidge asserted that America depended especially on its colleges and universities to promote “sound and loyal opinions.” The purpose of ISS study clubs, he charged, was to use the format of discussion and lectures as the “principal method of propagating radicalism” in our institutions of higher learning. He noted the claim of the ISS executive committee that its members represented seventeen colleges and universities, and that a number of members had served, or were then serving, on the faculties of various institutions. Even worse, about half of the seventeen colleges were colleges for women, or they admitted women; and a close reading of the student press of the women’s colleges compelled him to conclude that they had been infected with the Bolshevik virus. Although the ISS claimed that its sole purpose was to promote an intelligent interest in socialism among college men and women, the organization was in fact an “effective instrument in teaching Socialism by its publications, its lectures, and its conventions.” He assured his readers that he did not object to the study of socialism and other radical ideas, but he believed this ought to be done “under competent direction and instruction....” Coolidge insisted that he was not opposed to the idea of progress, but that he was merely offering resistance to “the breaking away from the old faiths.” In short, radicalism was the evil, for if college men and



women were to adhere to radical doctrines, he warned, it would inevitably lead to

the ultimate breaking down of the old sturdy virtues of manhood and womanhood, the insidious destruction of character, the weakening of the moral fiber of the individual, the destruction of the foundations of civilization.<sup>18</sup>

The real aim of the ISS, Coolidge announced, was to convert college students and graduates to the socialist doctrine, and one could not deny that the organization had enjoyed a measure of success in this endeavor.<sup>\*</sup>

## IV

The insistent attacks by influential persons and organizations—the self-appointed guardians of 100 percent Americanism—succeeded in painting the ISS as a clear and present danger to the republic. College officials were less inclined than in the past to tolerate an avowedly socialist study club on their campus, let alone permit affiliation with the ISS. A few bright spots remained, notably the chapters at Wisconsin and CCNY. But as noted earlier, Wisconsin was embattled because it retained its affiliation with the ISS and continued to cultivate the study of socialism, thereby arousing the fears of local zealots. The CCNY Social Problems Club, on the other hand, was compelled to sever its ties with the ISS and de-emphasize the study of socialist topics. Nevertheless, with a membership of about two hundred the club was still a potent force, and its open forum attracted a diverse group of lecturers. In fact, an editorial writer in the student paper commended the club for presenting an outstanding list of speakers under its auspices and announced that he looked forward with keen anticipation to such promised speakers as Horace M. Kallen, Harold J. Laski, Franklin H. Giddings, and Isaac Don Levine.<sup>19</sup>



By 1921 college organizing activities were at a standstill. Most of the prominent lecturers who in the past donated their services had left the ISS, and the financial condition of the society made it impossible to pay the travel expenses of available speakers. For a number of reasons the income of the ISS had declined considerably, Laidler reported to the executive committee. The high cost of living was especially hard on members of “the so-called intellectual proletariat” and on those members and friends of the ISS who had modest incomes from investments. Moreover, the uncertain business outlook inhibited gifts from former contributors; certain other contributors “have been scared off from radical movements by the many drives against radicals” and the fear of being branded as disciples of bolshevism. Another factor in the decline of college organizing was the split of the socialist movement in 1919. For the first time since it had been organized in 1905, the ISS was no longer the only radical group on campus. After 1919 the shrinking number of radical students was split into socialist and communist factions, foreshadowing the bitter struggles of the thirties. At the University of Chicago, for instance, the communists scorned the ISS chapter because they considered it too conservative; liberal students, on the other hand, kept their distance because of the chapter’s socialist label. Indeed, on the eve of the era of Harding normalcy, it was questionable altogether whether students would continue to show any interest in the study of socialism and social reform, or whether they would simply turn inward and tend to their private concerns. College students, the *New York Times* noted approvingly, were no longer signing their letters “Yours for the revolution.” The chief reason why students refused to fight against oppression and were unresponsive to those who urged them to join in making over the world, the *Times* ventured, was that they were totally unaware of any oppression. And so long as “amateur revolutionists” were unable to show students a cause in which they could believe, the revolutionists would not succeed.<sup>20</sup>

Recognizing the changed climate in postwar America, the ISS executive committee concluded that the survival of the society was at stake and that its continued existence required a shift in emphasis, perhaps even a change of name. In retrospect one notes a shift away

from concern with college organizing, even during the war. The ISS summer conference of 1917, for instance, dealt largely with the problems and prospects of the labor movement both during and after the war. Similarly, the 1918 summer conference devoted most of its sessions to the problems of social reconstruction after the war, specifically as reconstruction affected national politics, the Supreme Court, industry, agriculture, health, and religion. There was also a lengthy discussion of the possible impact of reconstruction on the labor movement, on women, and on colonial peoples. The shift from preoccupation with organizing college chapters to the broader concerns of the labor movement was clearly evident at the 1918 convention, the first to be held after the war. One of the subjects discussed at length was the proposed League of Nations and its value to the workers. Evans Clark and Scott Nearing saw little hope in a League dominated by the victorious capitalist powers—an organization, moreover, that would exclude Russia and Germany. Horace M. Kallen, Louis B. Boudin, and Harry Dana, on the other hand, claimed to see distinct advantages for working people in an international organization that would help break down the spirit of nationalism that had fueled the war. Dana suggested that socialists, who had been far ahead of President Wilson in advocating international cooperation, would be unwise to permit Wilson to adopt their ideas.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, the twelfth and last annual convention of the ISS in December 1920 was billed as an Intercollegiate Conference on Labor and Radical Movements. In addition to such familiar names as Florence Kelley, Morris Hillquit, Jessie Wallace Hughan, Evans Clark, and Norman Thomas, the speakers included Sidney Hillman, Robert Minor, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. In what appears to have been a final attempt to revive its flagging college chapters, the ISS announced it was broadening the scope of the convention “to include all college organizations interested in social questions.” The society believed this was desirable in order to give students an opportunity “to come into active touch with the real problems of labor and radical movements.” This approach represented a distinct departure from previous practice. In the past, active involvement in the problems of the labor and socialist

movements was either frowned upon or encouraged only half-heartedly, though some prominent student leaders at times suggested a more activist role for ISS chapters. During the convention a committee was appointed to examine the feasibility of a merger of the ISS with two liberal student organizations: Young Democracy, and the Intercollegiate Conference on Democracy. The committee presented two reports. The majority report committed the merged organization to the “scientific study and discussion of social reorganization, democracy in industry, and international relationships.” The minority resolution, presented by Harvard delegate Horace B. Davis who stated its sponsors were communists, urged the organization to join with those who were struggling for revolution in the United States. After discussion the majority report was adopted, subject to the approval of the three executive committees as well as the membership of the three organizations.<sup>22</sup> Seemingly, nothing came of the scheme.

To compound its difficulties the ISS, for financial reasons, was forced to cease publication of the *Socialist Review* in the spring of 1921.\* In the last issue of the journal, Laidler announced plans for its successor, to be known as *Labor Age*. Though the new journal would not ignore “the more narrowly socialist problems,” it would stress primarily the problems of labor unions. *Labor Age* made its appearance in November 1921. Sponsored and controlled by a group of labor unions, the journal had no connection with the ISS. Thus for the first time in more than a dozen years, the ISS was without its own publication—a means of communication it had relied on heavily in its work in the colleges. Lacking the financial base to support a journal or to send speakers to the colleges, the ISS executive committee worked out a plan for the reorganization of the society. Although it would continue its work in the colleges, the ISS informed its members, it would make an effort to reach groups other than collegians, and it would attempt to do work “similar to that of the British Fabians.” A new name had not yet been selected, but the names proposed included the American Fabian Society and the New Commonwealth League.<sup>23</sup> Since the ISS had always stressed its educational mission and had in fact published a variety of research studies, the society’s proposal to perform work “similar to that of the

British Fabians” gave formal recognition to long-standing practice. But there were differences too; for in attempting to interest undergraduates in colleges and universities in the multiple problems created by the rapid industrialization and urbanization of American society, the ISS went considerably beyond the Fabian program.

Although no official announcement was made at the time, the executive committee of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID)—the name ultimately adopted by the reorganized society—held its first meeting on October 24, 1921. Harry Laidler, who as the sole remaining member of the original ISS executive committee of 1905 represented a link with the past, became director of research. Shortly thereafter, Laidler and Norman Thomas were jointly appointed executive directors of the league. The following month an advertisement in *Labor Age* disclosed that at a dinner to be held on November 17, 1921, at the Yorkville Casino in New York, the ISS would announce “A New Name, A New Object, A New Program.” The new object would be “education for a new social order based on production for public use and not for private profit.”<sup>24</sup> The change of name was more than symbolic. The old ISS assigned top priority to its work in institutions of higher education; the LID decided to give greater weight to its adult activities and assign a lesser role to its work with students, at least in its early years. But there were also similarities. Both organizations were firmly committed to democratic socialism; and both promoted the study of socialism not as a rigid creed, but as a means of comprehending the modern industrial world. Again, like the ISS the LID too represented a loose alliance of socialists, trade unionists, and assorted liberals and progressives.

The LID did, in fact, carry on the educational task begun by the ISS, but college work was no longer its primary mission. After visiting some colleges and universities in the Middle West during the 1922–23 academic year, Laidler reported that “there is still a survival of hysteria in our academic institutions.”<sup>25</sup> In short, organizational work in the colleges would remain problematical throughout the twenties, for the conditions that had promoted the growth of the ISS in the prewar period no longer existed. For one thing, the radical impulse—part of the larger movement of protest and reform sweeping the country in the years

immediately before the First World War—had in the main run its course, at least temporarily. For another, the spirit of tolerance in which the ISS had grown to maturity had been replaced by a climate of intolerance and widespread hostility toward all manifestations of radicalism and liberalism. In the thirties, with the menace of fascism and the threat of war acting as twin spurs to renewed activity on campus, the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the LID's student wing, was to infuse new vitality into its work in the colleges.

## Notes

\* The affiliated chapters were Adelphi, Berkeley Divinity School, Cornell, the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan, Ohio State, Radcliffe, Simmons, Vassar, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Wisconsin. Unaffiliated were Barnard, CCNY, Clark, Harvard, Hunter, and the University of Pittsburgh.

\* Starting with the October-November 1918 issue, the *Intercollegiate Socialist* stopped listing the names of institutions in which chapters were in existence. The *Socialist Review*, which succeeded the former as the society's journal in 1919, did not resume the practice.

\* Perhaps because of its prominence, the Social Science Club, successor to the Wisconsin Socialist Club, was finding it increasingly difficult to hear speakers of its choice on campus. Early in 1921 the university authorities refused permission for the use of the gymnasium for lectures by Scott Nearing and Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of *The Nation*. The same year the Social Science Club, in a petition mailed to each member of the Board of Regents, stated that the members of the club "respectfully call your attention ... to what we deem a lack of that spirit of broad-minded toleration which should mark a great university such as ours." Invoking the famous 1894 Statement of the Regents defending freedom of inquiry, the club declared that the best remedy for any speaker's advocacy of "unsound doctrines" was free and open discussion; "we believe that truth never shines so brightly as when it comes into collision with error." The Regents refused to grant the club's petition for an open forum. They insisted that since they had ultimate responsibility for the views of any speaker using a university platform, they had to retain control over the kind of speakers selected by the club. See "Petition to Regents," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 23 (Jan. 1922), 85.

\* Some forty-five years later, another observer also suggested that the ISS was a conspiracy to subvert America from within. In her reading, ISS doctrine was transmuted into a plot hatched by the Fabian Society! Fabian socialism, it seemed, discovered the "magic formula" that enabled it to establish its enduring influence in the United States. "Under the pretext of satisfying young peoples' 'normal desire' for information on the nature of Socialism, the ISS ... was able to establish itself unobtrusively as an American outpost and affiliate of the London Fabian

Society.” See Rose L. Martin, *Fabian Freeway: High Road to Socialism in the U.S.A., 1884–1966* (Chicago, 1966), p. 177 and passim.

\* The year before, Harold J. Laski gently chided the ISS for putting too much effort into publishing the *Socialist Review* rather than concentrating on the kind of research studies produced by such Fabians as Graham Wallas and Sidney Webb. “I admire the tenacity which struggles with a monthly review; but I think a series of competent studies would go further and deeper.” *SR* 8 (May 1920), 379.

## Epilogue

The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, Randolph Bourne complained in 1916, was too respectable. The young college-trained radical, he added, should be a thinker whose role it was to assume intellectual leadership of the labor movement. The ISS, of course, rejected the elitist implications of Bourne's prescription; more on that in a moment. From Bourne's perspective, the ISS was undoubtedly too respectable; for Bourne, though still a member of the New York alumni chapter of the ISS, wrote as a noted cultural radical who was closer in spirit to the Young Intellectuals than to the ISS. As one of the leading spokesmen for the Young Intellectuals, Bourne was probably more concerned with artistic rebellion than political protest; indeed, by 1916 he was more attracted to philosophical anarchism than to socialism. Since cultural radicalism played no part either in the program or the practice of the ISS, however, the society could hardly be faulted on that account. Cultural regeneration, the ISS expected, would be a byproduct of economic and social transformation; even more important, in the cooperative commonwealth the mass of working people would for the first time have access to culture and enjoy its benefits. Still, the ISS was without doubt the most radical of all contemporary campus political groups; and those college administrators who erected barriers for ISS chapters, or suppressed them altogether, presumably acted in the belief that the ISS was anything but respectable.

The ISS was part of the great wave of social protest, reform, and radicalism that began early in this century and reached its high-water mark in the years before the United States entered the Great War. ISS campus radicals were not hostile to democracy or the prevailing culture. On the contrary, they shared the democratic values of the larger society



but proposed to extend them to the commercial and industrial spheres. Nonetheless, in the eyes of many, perhaps most, college administrators, the ISS was tainted by its presumed connection with the Socialist party. Their suspicion may have been aroused because, over a period of years, most of the leading figures of the Socialist party considered the ISS sufficiently important to devote their time and talents to its advancement. They spanned the spectrum from “left” to “right” and included such diverse individuals as Eugene Debs, William English Walling, Frank Bohn, Louis Boudin, Victor Berger, Morris Hillquit, Norman Thomas, and John Spargo. Yet the party neither founded the ISS nor supported it financially. And while the ISS endorsed the goals of the socialist movement, it was neither an appendage nor the youth arm of the Socialist party; the relationship between them was symbiotic rather than organic.

Moreover, the ISS claimed no special status for its members either within the Socialist party or the labor movement. Though most of its members were college-trained men and women, the society did not envision its role as that of an intellectual vanguard of the working class. Quite the contrary, it frequently reminded its members that a college education was a privilege enjoyed by only a small proportion of their generation. Having been granted that privilege, they had the clear obligation to assist the workers in their difficult struggle for a better life. For their part, working men and women were fully capable of discerning their best interests and developing leaders from within their own ranks. This attitude explains in part why the ISS, though a congenial home for many campus intellectuals and their adult counterparts, did not make a systematic effort to contribute theoretical knowledge to the socialist movement, as suggested by Bourne.

Lewis Feuer has proposed an intriguing theory of political student movements according to which all such movements are the result of persistent generational conflict. Though explicitly acknowledging the idealism of radical students, Feuer claims they are also motivated by an unconscious drive to de-authoritize their elders—the surrogate fathers—as a prelude to militant social action. The temper of the ISS, he writes, “was largely one of generational uprising....” Participation in its activities, moreover, “tended to alienate its members from American life

and realities.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever merit Feuer’s theory may have with respect to other student movements, the evidence strongly suggests that generational conflict was not a factor in the relations between ISS students and their elders. ISS student leaders accepted the legitimacy and authority of college administrators, and they did not challenge authority structures either within the colleges and universities or in the larger society. To confront authority, to challenge its right to govern, to use Blanquist tactics of intimidation, were methods alien to ISS students because they were totally outside their range of experience. Student leaders, moreover, enjoyed harmonious relations with the adult members of the ISS executive committee. They welcomed the guidance and support of the national office and showed little resentment of adult leadership. In time, students were given a greater voice in the society’s inner councils, even though the financial burden continued to be borne by the executive committee and its friends. Finally, though ISS students protested vigorously against social injustice, they certainly felt no overpowering sense of alienation. It is, after all, possible to be sharply critical of one’s society without turning one’s back on it altogether.

Since youth was manifestly a temporary state, the ISS insisted that it not be prolonged unduly. Thus the society often reminded its members that the college years were a time to study and learn and prepare for the serious responsibilities of adulthood. For this reason, it also cautioned them to postpone active participation in the partisan battles outside the college walls until after graduation. At first most student members, unsure of themselves, accepted this notion which, paradoxically, smacked of the ivory tower and “the passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence” condemned by Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and other early leaders of the ISS. As student leaders gained experience and self-confidence, however, they increasingly came to believe that college students ought to join forces with those in the socialist and labor movements who were struggling against the defenders of the status quo. The ISS executive committee remained ambivalent in the matter and discouraged activist students only half-heartedly.

The history of the ISS illustrates again the significance of the extracurriculum in the lives of college students. In one sense the

program of the ISS was a conscious effort to extend the learning process beyond the classroom walls. Learning, the society maintained, takes place not only in the classroom under the guidance of a teacher, but in almost any setting where students are willing to take responsibility for their own education. Very likely the ISS struck a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of some of the best students precisely because it appealed to their idealism while offering a welcome supplement to the often unrewarding work of the classroom. Chapter membership was inclusive and did not imply ideological commitment. Moreover, in their study meetings the members were not limited to the discussion of socialism and other movements of social reform; they were free to strike out in any direction and to discuss all issues from different viewpoints. Finally, the ISS national office and the college chapters themselves provided noted lecturers who exposed the members as well as the entire campus community to contemporary social and economic problems rarely discussed in the classroom.

What, then, were the accomplishments of this student movement, which early in the century introduced American college students to the study of socialism? For one thing, the activities of ISS chapters helped to quicken the pace of campus discourse on contemporary social and political problems, particularly in the trend-setting private universities of the East and in most of the state universities of the Middle West. At a time when scholarship was not highly valued among students, the ISS elevated the intellectual tone of the college and promoted pride in scholarly achievement. Chapter activities, moreover, stimulated student interest in the regular college curriculum and undoubtedly caused many students to explore courses in economics, government, history, sociology, and literature. Basically, the ISS had no quarrel with the values of the traditional liberal arts curriculum, and it did not advocate drastic changes in that curriculum. As the society saw it, however, academic work seemingly failed to direct the intellectual curiosity of students into socially constructive channels, nor did it equip them to cope with the mounting problems of urban America. This deficiency, the ISS believed, could be remedied by instruction in the philosophy and practice of socialism. By giving the liberal arts curriculum a radical

cast, the ISS hoped to revitalize it and make it adequate to the challenges of the modern world.

The ISS, moreover, strongly supported the academic freedom both of the teacher and the student. Indeed, at a time when American professors, with the full support of the American Association of University Professors, decided that *Lernfreiheit* no longer merited their concern, the ISS insisted that academic freedom was indivisible: that student freedoms were coequal with teachers' rights. Since the ISS initiated a novel experiment in self-instruction in which students were encouraged to study unorthodox economic and social theories, the logic of its position required that it also uphold the right of teachers to teach these as well as other unpopular doctrines. This was no mere tactical move, however, for the ISS and its chapters struggled continually for the right of assembly in college buildings and the right to hear speakers who presented a variety of social views. The search for truth, the ISS believed, could best be promoted by untrammelled investigation and discussion, engaged in jointly by students and professors.

Perhaps the finest achievement of the ISS was the people it produced. Throughout its history, the ISS provided a forum for a remarkable group of gifted young men and women whose influence then and later was far out of proportion to their numbers. In the ISS ethos, service to society was valued more highly than absorption in self or in personal advancement; and it was the ideal of social service, the "'Wisconsin Idea' of socialism" in Edwin E. Witte's apt formulation, which the ISS transmitted to its members. William M. Leiserson, like Witte a member of the Wisconsin chapter, also invoked the Wisconsin Idea to announce his commitment to serving society. Such service, he wrote, would be a fitting way to repay the people of his state for their sacrifices, which enabled him and his classmates to enjoy the benefits of a college education.<sup>2</sup> In challenging its members to confront contemporary social problems, the ISS aroused their social consciousness and instilled in many of them a strong feeling for social justice. They shared a belief in the plasticity of all social institutions and in the power of men and women to mold them to their needs. They believed in people and in eternal progress, and they thought that the application of socialist

principles would go a long way toward solving the myriad social problems created by rapid industrialization and urbanization. Only a few of the prominent student leaders retained their earlier allegiance to socialism; the great majority sought to realize their ideals through service in other social institutions, including the law, journalism, education, government, and the labor movement. Not surprisingly, many of them participated actively in various reform movements, culminating in the New Deal. As a group, their impact on American life and culture was considerable.\*

In the early years of this century the ISS started a tradition of student activism whose distinguishing feature was a passionate concern with the building of a better social order. Henceforth, organized student groups would show greater interest in the social and political currents of the great world outside the college walls than in the more parochial concerns of earlier student generations. When the ISS came to the colleges and universities, American students first began to look at society from a radical perspective. Yet this orientation was rooted firmly in commitment to democracy; no matter how desirable, social change, the ISS insisted, would be of lasting benefit only if brought about by democratic methods. And socialism of any kind was not worth having without the support of the majority of the people. Ultimately, the ISS was overwhelmed by adversity—the war, the split in the socialist movement caused by the Bolshevik Revolution, the postwar hysteria. But the tradition of democratic socialism begun by the society proved to have remarkable resiliency. It was carried on by the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID) and, at least in its early years, by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). When SDS abandoned that tradition and adopted the tactics of confrontation, it broke apart and ended in anarchy and random violence.

At this writing the campus is quiet, seemingly exhausted by the turmoil of the sixties and early seventies. But the quiet is deceptive, and one should not conclude that student activism has run its course, or that student movements based in politics are a thing of the past. In this century, student attitudes have been a fairly reliable barometer of the nation's social and political climate. More than that, these attitudes have

not only reflected but at times foreshadowed the temper of the times. Predictions are hazardous but if history is any guide, sooner or later new issues will emerge in the larger society, and these issues will find an echo among an influential group of college students. The ISS sought to fulfill its mission, which it defined as bringing “light, more light” to college students, within the context of democratic politics. We live in more contentious times, and the nation’s political life has recently been subjected to severe shocks whose consequences are as yet incalculable. It is thus uncertain whether the next surge of the student movement will be democratic in spirit or whether it will take a more ominous turn, as indeed it did during the last, chaotic phase of SDS. What should be clear beyond any doubt, however, is that we can afford to ignore student sentiment only at our peril.

## **Note**

\* For a list of some ISS student leaders and their occupations, see Appendix B.

# Notes

## Abbreviations Used in the Notes

<i>BB</i>	<i>Barnard. Bulletin</i>
<i>BISS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Columbia Spectator</i>
<i>DC</i>	<i>Daily Cardinal</i> (University of Wisconsin)
<i>HC</i>	<i>Harvard Crimson</i>
<i>IS</i>	<i>Intercollegiate Socialist</i>
<i>ISSP</i>	<i>ISS Papers</i> (Tamiment Library, New York University)
<i>JSP</i>	James Graham Phelps Stokes Papers (Special Collections, Columbia University)
<i>LP</i>	Laidler Papers (Tamiment Library, New York University)
<i>MEC</i>	Minutes of Executive Committee of the ISS
<i>NYC</i>	<i>New York Call</i>
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>OHC</i>	Oral History Collection (Columbia University)
<i>ROS- ISSP</i>	Reports of Organizing Secretary (ISS Papers)
<i>SHSW</i>	State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison, Wisconsin)
<i>SR</i>	<i>Socialist Review</i>
<i>TC</i>	<i>The Campus</i> (CCNY)
<i>unp.</i>	unpaged



*YDN*

*Yale Daily News*

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# Chapter 1

1. Quoted by Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny* (New York, 1952), p. 58. One of the important factors in the rise of the Socialist party was the revulsion of many of the most active American socialists against the frequent heresy hunts which had marked Daniel De Leon's rule of the Socialist Labor party in the 1890s. See Lillian Symes and Travers Clement, *Rebel America* (New York, 1934), p. 219.

2. Philip S. Foner, ed., *Jack London, American Rebel: A Collection of His Social Writings Together with an Extensive Study of the Man and His Times* (New York, 1947), p. 405.

3. T. R. Roosevelt to Charles Ferris Gettemy, Feb. 1, 1905, in Elting E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 1113; Alpheus Thomas Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (New York, 1946), p. 160.

4. *The Reminiscences of Upton Sinclair* (1962), p. 195, in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University, hereafter Sinclair, OHC; Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (New York, 1962), pp. 113, 329.

5. W. J. Ghent, *Intercollegiate Socialist Society* (New York, 1908), p. 1.

6. Quoted by Harry W. Laidler, "History of ISS," n.d., LP.

7. Darrow to St. Clair [sic], Dec. 21, 1904, Triggs to Sinclair, Jan. 6, 1905, Flower to J. G. Phelps Stokes, Feb. 15, 1905, Higginson to Sinclair, May 3, 1905, in ISS Papers, Tamiment Institute Library, New York University. Cited hereafter as ISSP.

8. Garrison to Sinclair, Jan. 6, 1904 [1905?], Hawthorne to Sinclair, Dec. 29, 1904, ISSP. Hawthorne's theme, the callowness of youth, was hardly new. Its truth had been taken for granted in the antebellum college, and it had been forcefully expressed in important educational documents of that period, starting with the *Yale Report* of 1828. See Walter P. Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University* (New York, 1955), p. 5.

9. Veblen to Sinclair, Dec. 21, 1904, Commons to Sinclair, Dec. 20, 1904, Ely to Sinclair, Dec. 23, 1904, Carpenter to Sinclair, Jan. 3, 1905, ISSP.

10. *NYT*, Jan. 28, 1906, part 3, p. 6.

11. Some years later, William English Walling, whom the press also tagged as a millionaire socialist, wryly cited Clarence Darrow's definition of that breed as a socialist "who has worked his way so far up in society as to have his name in the telephone book." Walling to [New York] *Globe*, May 3, 1917, clipping in William English Walling Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, hereafter Walling Papers.

12. Untitled MS, describing the call for the ISS, n.d., in James Graham Phelps Stokes Papers, Special Collections, Columbia University. Cited hereafter as JSP. That Stokes was not exaggerating is evident from the fact that the ISS Papers contain several hundred letters from correspondents throughout the country who had seen the call in the *Appeal to Reason*, *The Worker*, the *Christian Socialist*, *Common Sense*, *The Vanguard*, and other papers. Since the ISS

Papers are fragmentary at best, many other letters probably have been lost. The *New York Times* printed the call under the headline, "Call to Study Socialism," but without further comment, on June 4, 1905, sec. 1, p. 7.

[13.](#) Roswell H. Johnson to M. R. Holbrook, Aug. 6, 1905, Edward Perkins Clarke to Holbrook, Aug. 8, 1905, Scudder to Holbrook, June 16, 1905, in ISSP. Several years later, Algie M. Simons, graduate of the University of Wisconsin and socialist writer, also complained about the apolitical nature of college students. The American student is isolated from life, he wrote, and thus cares little about political activity. During the quadrennial campaigns, he sometimes "plays" with political clubs, but political life rarely is real to him. See "Socialism and the College Student," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 8 (June-July 1907), 381–82.

[14.](#) L. E. Kalterfeld to Holbrook, July 1, 1905, Feigenbaum to Holbrook, n.d., Laidler to Holbrook, July 3, 1905, ISSP.

[15.](#) Editorial, *Harper's Weekly*, July 15, 1905, p. 1003; Higginson to editor, *ibid.*, July 29, 1905, p. 1094; Easley's attack is quoted in "Intercollegiate Socialism," *Public Opinion*, Nov. 4, 1905, pp. 592–93.

[16.](#) Morris Hillquit, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life* (New York, 1971 [c1934]), p. 61; Laidler, "History of ISS," p. 11, LP. It was Weeks who had arranged to have Miss Holbrook take care of the correspondence in connection with the call and serve as first secretary of the ISS. The members of the Collectivist Society "were of all sorts—party members, near-members, and others of various degrees of closeness to the regular organization." W. J. Ghent to Joan London, Aug. 27, 1937, William J. Ghent Papers, Library of Congress.

[17.](#) "Inter-Collegiate Socialist Society" [1905], unp., ISSP.

[18.](#) Sinclair recalls that he was asked to serve as president but that he refused and instead nominated Jack London, who had recently published the enormously successful *The Seewolf*. It was a shrewd move by Sinclair who had a keen sense of publicity. Stokes was treasurer in fact if not in name, for Sinclair leaned on him heavily for money. "It cost money to be a millionaire socialist, when I was around, because I was merciless to them. What right did they have to have all that money and live in an elegant house when I wanted to send out circulars?" See Sinclair, OHC, p. 64.

[19.](#) League for Industrial Democracy, *20 Years of Social Pioneering: The League for Industrial Democracy Celebrates its 20th Anniversary* (New York, 1926), p. 58; London to Holbrook, Sept. 20, 1905 (copy), ISSP.

[20.](#) Editorial, *HC*, Dec. 21, 1905, p. 2.

[21.](#) Jack London, "Revolution," in Foner, ed., *Jack London, American Rebel*, pp. 488, 490–91; *HC*, Dec. 22, 1905, p. 1; *Boston Evening Transcript*, Dec. 22, 1905, p. 10. London also wrote of revolution as "that passionate gospel, the Brotherhood of Man." The revolution was essentially "a religious propaganda with a fervor in it of Paul and Christ." See London, "Revolution," in Foner, ed., *Jack London, American Rebel*, p. 504.

[22.](#) Upton Sinclair, *American Outpost* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1969 [c1932]), p. 160; Sinclair, *Autobiography*, pp. 113–14.

[23.](#) *NYT*, Jan. 20, 1906, p. 2.

[24.](#) Introductory Remarks by J. G. Phelps Stokes [1906], JSP. (Mimeographed.) Although Stokes dissociated himself from London's views on the class struggle, his remarks were

suggestive of the tolerant atmosphere in which ideological debate was conducted in the ISS, at least until World War I.

[25.](#) *NYT*, Jan. 20, 1906, p. 2. Seemingly, London and Mother Jones were correct. During the bloody fifteen-month strike of miners at Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1903–4, General Sherman Bell held over thirteen hundred miners in bull pens without the right of habeas corpus. When a judge issued an order to release the prisoners being held illegally, Bell, whose soldiers were in the pay of Colorado’s mining interests, rejected the order and was quoted as saying, “To hell with the Constitution! We’re not following the Constitution.” See Sidney Lens, *Radicalism in America* (New York, 1966), p. 219.

[26.](#) The Reverend Alexander Irvine, a socialist, made all arrangements and personally guaranteed the rent for Woolsey Hall. On the campus and in New Haven posters appeared, portraying Jack London “in a red sweater and in the background the lurid glare of a great conflagration.” See Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London*, 2 vols. (New York, 1921), 2:107–8.

[27.](#) Joan London, *Jack London and His Times* (Seattle, 1968 [c1939]), p. 301. Miss London records that her father had come across Paul Shorey’s description of the American university ideal as “the passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence,” and had found that it summed up precisely his own attitude. Shorey was a professor at the University of Chicago.

[28.](#) *New Haven Evening Register*, Jan. 27, 1906, pp. 6–7; *NYT*, Feb. 1, 1906, p. 8.

[29.](#) Letter to editor, *NYT*, Feb. 5, 1906, p. 8.

[30.](#) Quoted in the *New York Daily Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1906, p. 1.

[31.](#) “Placing Jack London’s Books Under the Ban,” and “History Repeats Itself,” *The Arena* 35 (Apr. 1906), 435.

## Chapter 2

[1.](#) MEC, Sept. 12, 1905, Executive Committee to “Dear Friends and Comrades” [1905], ISSP.

[2.](#) *The Worker*, Dec. 2, 1905, p. 1.

[3.](#) Letter to “Dear Comrade” [M. R. Holbrook], June 16, 1905, ISSP. The man he referred to was Daniel Webster Hoan, an adult special student in the College of Letters and Science who later served as the socialist mayor of Milwaukee. Many years later Cross, by then a prominent professor of economics at Stanford, told an interviewer that Dan Hoan, Helen Sumner, and he had founded the Wisconsin Socialist Club in 1902. Cross also recalled that he had joined the Socialist party when he came to Madison and that the members of the club had attended meetings of the Madison party local in the back of a cigar store. See Joann Dietz Ariff, “Ira Brown Cross: Portrait of an Economics Professor,” Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1967, p. 11. [Copy in University of Wisconsin Archives.] Cited by permission of the Director of the Bancroft Library. That Cross’s recollection was correct is borne out by reports in the college paper. See DC, Oct. 16, 1902, p. 4, Dec. 9, 1902, p. 3, and Feb. 25, 1903, p. 4.

[4.](#) *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 4 (Dec. 1902), 119. For the activities of the Wisconsin Socialist Club during the years 1904–8, see Kathrine Gedney, “The U.W. Socialist Club,” *Wisconsin Spectator* 1 (Nov. 1908), 18–20. Miss Gedney was a member of the class of 1909, University of Wisconsin.

[5.](#) F. I. Bamford to Holbrook, Aug. 11, 1905, ISSP. Bamford suggested that the ISS restrict active membership to socialists, for “only men who have the fire can communicate it.” On the other hand, “fseekers” might be admitted as visiting members. Ibid. The Canadian-born Frederick Irons Bamford, a “gentleman by birth and education,” a Christian socialist, was associate librarian at the Oakland Free Library and organizer and spark plug of the Ruskin Club of Oakland. When London was nineteen years old, Bamford had befriended the young writer and encouraged him to continue his education. London’s growing interest in socialism helped cement the bond between them. See Joan London, *Jack London and His Times*, pp. 95–96, 215.

[6.](#) Rudolph E. Bosshard to Holbrook, May 29, 1905, ISSP.

[7.](#) Scudder to Holbrook, Sept. 6, 1905, *ibid.*; Hummer to Stokes, Nov. 20, 1906, JSP.

[8.](#) Letter to Ghent, May 21, 1907, ISSP. The Intercollegiate Civic League, known originally as the College Men’s Political Association, was founded in 1905. It was made up of affiliated clubs in colleges and universities, and its purpose was to promote good government and the study of public affairs.

[9.](#) Zoe Hartman to Stokes, Dec. 15, 1906, JSP.

[10.](#) Franklin H. Giddings, “Student Life in New York,” *Columbia University Quarterly* 3 (Dec. 1900), 3. Some years later John Macy, Harvard graduate and socialist writer, made essentially the same point. “Nothing could be more solidly conservative than American undergraduate youth,” he wrote. While many Russian students were rebels, American colleges

did not produce rebels; “[the students’] twilight sleep is perpetual.” See John Macy, *Socialism in America* (Garden City, N.Y., 1916), p. 113.

[11.](#) S. Ginsburg to Holbrook, Oct. 2, 1905, H. E. Barnes to Holbrook, Dec. 12, 1905, Frazer Arnold to Ellis O. Jones, Dec. 18, 1906, ISSP. An application for an ISS charter required five signatures.

[12.](#) *New York Daily Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1906, p. 10.

[13.](#) J. Rubin to Collins, Nov. 21, 1906, Una M. Bernard to Ghent, Mar. 30, 1908, ISSP.

[14.](#) Laidler, “History of the ISS,” LP. An announcement in the *Wesleyan Argus*, Dec. 20, 1905, p. 86, places the organizational meeting in late December 1905. After Laidler’s graduation in 1907, the chapter languished until he returned in 1911 as organizing secretary of the ISS and revived it. *Ibid.*, Nov. 20, 1911, p. 1.

[15.](#) Laidler, “Ten Years of I.S.S. Progress,” *IS* 4 (Dec.-Jan. 1915–16), 18. A student at Columbia College indicated in November of 1905 that the first meeting of the new “Socialist Society” would be held within the next few days. Max Schonberg to Holbrook, Nov. 22, 1905, ISSP. It is likely that the Columbia chapter was organized a few months before the Wesleyan chapter.

[16.](#) Feigenbaum to Sinclair, June 20, [1906], *ibid.*; Rubin to Collins, Nov. 21, 1906, ROS-ISSP; *CS*, Nov. 18, 1909, p. 2. As its first event, the reorganized Columbia club proudly announced a lecture by Lincoln Steffens. *Ibid.*, Dec. 3, 1909, p. 5.

[17.](#) Ernest Poole, *The Bridge: My Own Story* (New York, 1940), pp. 70–72, 196. Poole’s novel *His Family* was awarded the first Pulitzer prize. On the settlement movement, see Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement 1890–1914* (New York, 1967), pp. 111–12.

[18.](#) Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912–1917* (New York, 1959), p. 18; *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1910–11, p. 11; Sinclair, *Autobiography*, p. 113. Some of the literature mailed at such great cost in lost sleep, Sinclair recalled later, “was indignantly returned.” League for Industrial Democracy, *Forty Years of Education* (New York, 1945), p. 13.

[19.](#) Letter to Laidler, Jan. 30, 1906, ROS-ISSP. Laidler seemingly had a low opinion about London’s recent lectures on behalf of the ISS, for in his letter Sinclair urges him to reconsider the matter. London had addressed an overflow audience at Grand Central Palace, had done a good job, and had held his audience until the end.

[20.](#) Intercollegiate Socialist Society, *Intercollegiate Socialist Society* (New York, 1908), p. 2.

[21.](#) “Report of Merrick, Feb. 8, 1908–Apr. 10, 1908,” ROS-ISSP; “Report of Princeton Socialist Club,” *BISS*, Oct.-Nov. 1909, unp.

[22.](#) “Report of Merrick,” ROS-ISSP; *BB*, Apr. 1, 1908, p. 1, Nov. 4, 1908, p. 3.

[23.](#) Letter to Butler, Nov. 12, 1908, Columbia University Archives, through 1910 (W. T. Brewster folder), Columbia University.

[24.](#) Butler to Brewster, Nov. 13, 1908, *ibid.*; Brewster to Butler, Nov. 14, 1908, Butler to Brewster, Nov. 16, 1908, in Barnard College Archives, Departmental Correspondence, 1908–9 (folder 6), Barnard College.

[25.](#) *NYC*, Jan. 16, 1910, p. 1, *BB*, Dec. 16, 1908, p. 1.

[26.](#) See Henry D. Sheldon, *Student Life and Customs* (New York, 1901), pp. 270–71 and Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, 1962), pp. 369–70. An earlier shift in control over student life had taken place in the antebellum colleges. To cope with perpetual student unrest in those colleges, trustees had been increasingly compelled to delegate control over student discipline to the faculty. See Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University*, p. 4.

[27.](#) Henry Flury, “College Men and Socialism,” *International Socialist Review* 9 (Aug. 1908), 133.

[28.](#) “Report of Merrick, Feb. 8, 1908–Apr. 10, 1908,” ROS-ISSP; MEC, Oct. 16, 1908, Nov. 19, 1909, and Dec. 17, 1909, ISSP.

[29.](#) *Ibid.*, Apr. 10, Oct. 16, and Dec. 21, 1911; *TC*, Oct. 18, 1911, p. 10; MEC, Apr. 8 and Apr. 22, 1912, ISSP. The minutes do not reveal whether Stokes did in fact see Finley, but it is a matter of record that the chapter was in continuous existence from that time forward right through the Great War.

[30.](#) “America’s Trouble-Makers,” *Pearson’s Magazine* 20 (July 1908), 3–28. One who knew Creelman later characterized him as “sensational, inexact, narrow-minded, and insufferably egotistic.” Ghent to Joan London, Aug. 27, 1937, Ghent Papers.

[31.](#) *BISS*, May 1909, unp.

[32.](#) *HC*, Mar. 11, 1908, p. 3. The constitution of the Harvard Socialist Club declared that its purpose would be “the study of Socialism and all other radical programs of reform which aim at a better organic development of society.” Among other radical programs to be studied were “Communism, the Single Tax, and allied Theories.” See “History,” Minutes of Harvard Socialist Club, p. 11, Harvard University Archives.

[33.](#) William Roscoe Thayer, “The Mother of Radicals,” *Harvard Graduates’ Magazine* 22 (June 1914), 559. In a similar vein, William James believed that Harvard’s “undisciplinables are our proudest product.” See *Memories and Studies* (New York, 1911), p. 215.

[34.](#) Letter to Ghent, Feb. 23, 1908, ISSP.

[35.](#) Minutes of Harvard Socialist Club, p. 4, Harvard University Archives. Many years later Kenneth Macgowan, a friend of Lippmann and a charter member of the club, confirmed Jerome Randall’s role. “I know that Jerry Randall started the club without ISS blessing.” Macgowan to Laidler, July 23, 1958, LP.

[36.](#) W. J. Ghent, ISS secretary and himself a fine writer, fully appreciated Lippmann’s role. Lippmann had asked him to secure letters of introduction to prominent European socialists whom Lippmann planned to visit in the summer of 1908, and Ghent gladly obliged. Writing to Hillquit, Ghent described Lippmann as “a bright young fellow with considerable influence at Harvard....” As a result of Lippmann’s efforts, he informed Hillquit, Harvard has the “best study chapter in the I.S.S.” Letter to Hillquit, May 15, 1908, ISSP.

[37.](#) Mar. 5, 1908, p. 2.

[38.](#) “Harvard in Politics,” *Harvard Monthly* 49 (Dec. 1909), 95–98.

[39.](#) Lippmann to Merrick, May 20, 1908, ISSP; Minutes of Harvard Socialist Club, pp. 20–21, Harvard University Archives.



[40.](#) “Petition for a Course on Socialism [1910],” A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, 1909–14 (folder 1417), Harvard University Archives.

[41.](#) “The Social Problem,” *Harvard Illustrated Magazine* 12 (Dec. 1910), 93; *HC*, June 10, 1911, p. 2.

[42.](#) Harvard University, *Catalogue*, 1911–12, p. 417; 1912–13, p. 410; 1913–14, p. 408. Yale first offered a course on socialism in 1913–14, a course which the *Times* erroneously described as the “first formal course” on socialism in any American college or university. See *NYT*, Mar. 4, 1913, p. 1. Even the University of Wisconsin, where John R. Commons had previously covered aspects of socialism in his course on labor problems, did not offer a separate course on socialism until the spring of 1918. *DC*, Nov. 27, 1917, p. 4.

[43.](#) Letter to Laidler, Aug. 18, 1910, ISSP.

[44.](#) Hiram [K. Moderwell] to Lippmann, Oct. 18, 1910, Walter Lippmann Papers, Personal Correspondence 1910–14, Yale University Library. It is clear that for the next few years Lippmann continued to function as chief strategist of the Harvard Socialist Club; his successors in the presidency, Hiram K. Moderwell, Gerard C. Henderson, and Alfred Jaretzki, Jr., regularly sought his advice on matters of policy.

[45.](#) The central office continuously received orders for the Ross pamphlet and other publications. For example, H. Giffert, a physician, ordered two thousand copies of “Political Decay,” to be mailed to Joseph Swenson, a student at the University of Nebraska, for distribution to interested students. The librarian of the Syracuse Public Library ordered two popular ISS pamphlets, “Books on Socialism” and “Outline of Study Course for Chapters,” to be used as guides in buying books for readers of “Socialistic literature.” H. Giffert to Ellis O. Jones, Jan. 7, 1907, Ezekiel W. Mundy to ISS, Nov. 7, 1906, ISSP.

[46.](#) *BISS*, Mar. 1909, unp.; *DC*, Oct. 30, 1908, p. 1.

[47.](#) Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin: A History*, 2 vols. (Madison, 1949), 2:63–66; “Report of the President to the Regents, Mar. 2, 1910,” Van Hise Papers, Series 4/10/1, Box 18 (folder: Emma Goldman, 1909–10), University of Wisconsin Archives, Madison; *DC*, Jan. 27, 1910, p. 1.

[48.](#) Letter to editor, *DC*, Jan. 28, 1910, p. 1. A special committee, appointed by the Board of Visitors in the aftermath of the affair, affirmed that nobody connected with the university had invited Goldman and that she had spoken in a building [the student YMCA] not under the control of university authorities. The committee concluded that its investigation disclosed no evidence “that anarchistic, socialistic or other dangerous doctrines are being taught in the university.” Professor Ross, who had announced the Goldman lecture to his classes because he believed in the principle of free speech and because he had been angered while watching a local woman tear down announcements of the lecture, was also cleared by the committee. See “‘Investigation of Goldman Incident,’ Report of the Committee of the Board of Visitors,” *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 11 (Apr. 1910), 292–94.

[49.](#) Nearly two years earlier, Lippmann had suggested “a sort of Intercollegiate Convention,” attendance at which was to be limited to undergraduates, except for some invited guests. See letter to Merrick, May 20, 1908, ISSP. As it turned out, the first convention and all subsequent conventions were dominated by adults, although students played a greater role in later years.

[50.](#) *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp.; “Program of the First Annual Convention, January 14–15, 1910,” ISSP. Delegates complained that the date selected for this convention was unfortunate

because it limited attendance of students, and a motion was adopted to hold all future conventions during the Christmas vacation. Later that year, the executive committee voted to allow interested students in institutions without organized chapters to attend conventions as fraternal delegates. MEC, Nov. 4, 1910, *ibid.*

[51.](#) *Annual Statement of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 1910–11* (New York, 1911), p. 3; *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1910–11, pp. 7, 11.

[52.](#) “Financial Report, 1905–6 through 1908–9,” ISSP. “Trying to extract a dollar from a college man, even a Socialist,” the secretary of the Harvard Socialist Club wrote apologetically, “is not easy.” K. R. Macgowan to Rosa Laddon, Feb. 8, 1909, *ibid.*

[53.](#) Intercollegiate Socialist Society, *Intercollegiate Socialist Society* (New York, 1910), p. 2.

[54.](#) Frances Burger to Laidler, Aug. 23, 1910, ISSP. Earlier that year, Organizer Kirkpatrick, sometimes given to turgid prose, had praised “the guileless and effective political wickedness of those Barnard girls in their sugar-varnished devices for promoting Socialism among their benighted sisters... *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp.; Arthur S. Levy, Jr. to George R. Kirkpatrick, June 4, 1910, ISSP.

[55.](#) Karapetoff to Laidler, Sept. 3, 1910, Lippmann to Laidler, Aug. 18, 1910, ISSP. Some chapters, including the chapter at the University of Chicago, were experiencing difficulties unrelated to administrative interference. The secretary of that chapter wrote that he needed help badly because “our Chapter is dead.” Interest in socialism was minimal, it was difficult to obtain a quorum to conduct business, and even the chapter members were not actively helping the cause. H. S. Richards to Ghent, Mar. 22, 1910, *ibid.*

[56.](#) MEC, May 27, 1910, *ibid.*; “History of ISS,” p. 48, LP.

## Chapter 3

1. "The Intercollegiate Socialist Society," *Harvard Illustrated Magazine* 7 (Feb. 1906), 90–91.

2. *Socialism and the Student* (New York [1908]), p. 3; *YDN*, Feb. 15, 1911, p. 1.

3. "Ignorance. The College and Socialism," *Schenectady Citizen*, n.d., quoted in *Progressive Dentist* 1 (June 1912), 25–27. A student leader at Barnard, echoing Jack London's early speeches on behalf of the ISS, told students that it was no longer possible for them to remain aloof. They would have to decide if they wished to be either for or against socialism and they would have to have reasons for their opposition or support. Frances Burger, "The Importance of Socialism," *Barnard Bear* 5 (Dec. 1909), 60–63.

4. See David Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx: From the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (Detroit, 1967), p. 185. "Hill-quit, Lunn, Maurer, Debs, Simons, Berger, Wayland, Haywood, and Harriman had little in common beyond the little red Socialist membership cards in their wallets." David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History* (Chicago, 1967 [cl955]), p. 42.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

6. As late as 1914, Upton Sinclair acknowledged candidly that he had never read Marx's *Capital*. Letter to William English Walling, Aug. 12, 1914, Walling Papers.

7. "The Influence of Karl Marx on Contemporary Socialism," *American Journal of Sociology* 16 (July 1910), 22. Though Spargo was a respected interpreter of socialism, his authority was by no means unchallenged. At an ISS conference in the summer of 1916, Spargo was scheduled to give an address on the essence of socialism. When Caro Lloyd, sister of Henry Demarest Lloyd, asked theologian Walter Rauschenbusch if he planned to attend the lecture in order to learn what socialism is, Rauschenbusch replied, "No, I am going to hear what Spargo thinks it is." Rauschenbusch, of course, was not a socialist, but most knowledgeable socialists in the ISS would have readily agreed with him. See Caro Lloyd, "Our Second Summer Conference," *IS* 5 (Oct.-Nov. 1916), 5.

8. In 1909, in the preface to the English edition of *Evolutionary Socialism*, Bernstein wrote:

"Unable to believe in finalities at all, I cannot believe in a final aim of socialism. But I strongly believe in the socialist movement, in the march forward of the working classes, who *step by step* must work out their emancipation by changing society from ... a commercial land-holding oligarchy to a real democracy which ... is guided by the interests of those who work and create." (Emphasis added.) See Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, trans. Edith C. Harvey (New York, 1961 [cl899]), pp. viii-ix.

9. *BB*, Nov. 9, 1915, p. 5.

10. *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (New York, 1909), p. v. Spargo defined socialism in nearly identical terms as those used by Hill-quit. See John Spargo and George Louis Arner,

*Elements of Socialism* (New York, 1912), p. 5. Jessie Wallace Hughan, a member of the ISS executive committee, defined socialism as “the political movement of the working class which aims to abolish exploitation by means of the collective ownership and democratic management of the principal instruments of production and distribution.” *The Facts of Socialism* (New York, 1913), p. 67.

11. See Hillquit, *Socialism in Theory and Practice*, p. 331; Inter-collegiate Socialist Society, *What Socialists Stand For* (New York, [1910]), p. 1.

12. *NYC*, Feb. 5, 1911, p. 13; Spargo, “Influence of Marx on Contemporary Socialism,” pp. 21–40; *IS* 3 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 20–21.

13. *NYC*, Jan. 1, 1915, p. 4; *CS*, Dec. 16, 1915, p. 3. Walling’s interpretation of the class struggle was probably unique, especially since it came from one who was often identified with the left wing of the Socialist party. At the very least, it was his own contribution to the “57 varieties” of socialism he alluded to.

14. *Ibid.*, Dec. 18, 1915, p. 1; *NYC*, Feb. 5, 1911, mag. sec., p. 13; *YDN*, Feb. 15, 1911, p. 1.

15. *NYT*, Jan. 15, 1910, p. 16.

16. *BB*, Dec. 20, 1915, p. 3.

17. “The Message of Socialism to Collegians,” *The Independent*, Aug. 18, 1910, pp. 353–58.

18. *BB*, Dec. 15, 1909, p. 1; *CS*, Apr. 9, 1910, p. 1; *NYT*, Dec. 29, 1911, p. 6.

19. *Facts of Socialism*, pp. 60–61; “What Is Socialism?” *IS* 1 (Feb.-Mar. 1913), 8. In writing her textbook for ISS chapters, one of Miss Hughan’s tasks was to expound to American college students the difference between the socialism developed by “abstraction-loving Germans” and that of American socialists. See Hughan, *Facts of Socialism*, p. 147.

20. Spargo, “Influence of Marx on Contemporary Socialism,” p. 31; William English Walling, *Socialism As It Is. A Survey of the World-Wide Revolutionary Movement* (New York, 1912), p. 424; *NYT*, Oct. 23, 1910, mag. sec., p. 2.

21. Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx*, p. 106; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Baltimore, 1967), p. 119.

22. Hillquit, *Socialism in Theory and Practice*, p. 110; Hughan, *Facts of Socialism*, pp. 135–36. Victor Berger told the Yale chapter of the ISS that socialists also demanded old-age pensions for people over sixty and for orphans. *YDN*, Apr. 24, 1913, p. 2.

23. *CS*, Nov. 11, 1910, p. 6; *BB*, Nov. 17, 1910, p. 3. By appointment of Governor John Peter Altgeld, Florence Kelley had served as chief factory inspector of Illinois. After meeting Friedrich Engels in London, she had translated Engels’ *Condition of the Working Classes In England in 1844*.

24. “German State Socialism,” *IS* 4 (Dec.-Jan. 1915–16), 10–13. Earlier the Fabians had cautioned that “although Socialism involves State control, State control does not imply Socialism....” See George Bernard Shaw, ed., *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (Gloucester, Mass., 1967 [c1889]), p. 259. On the purpose of state intervention, cf. Kautsky:

“If the modern state nationalizes certain industries, it does not do so for the purpose of restricting capitalist exploitation, but for the purpose of protecting the capitalist system and

establishing it upon a firmer basis, or for the purpose of itself taking a hand in the exploitation of labor... Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle* (Chicago, 1910), p. 110.

[25.](#) Letter to [Rabbi] Stephen S. Wise, Jan. 31, 1917, enclosing outline of address, "Can Democracy Be Made Efficient Through Socialism," prepared for the Sunday Evening Forum of Wise's Free Synagogue, JSP. But the ISS also professed to see a silver lining in the growth of wartime collectivism. Increasing participation by governments in business and industry, we read in a book commissioned by the ISS executive committee, might lead to the growth of internationalism. Such participation "suppresses anti-social individualism most thoroughly" and by cementing "national solidarity... within the nation, it may pave the way for international solidarity." See Walling and Laidler, eds., *State Socialism* (New York, 1917), p. xliv.

[26.](#) *BB*, Dec. 15, 1909, p. 1 and Mar. 6, 1912, p. 5. Addressing the Harvard chapter of the ISS, George R. Lunn, a minister who was then the socialist mayor of Schenectady, N.Y., praised capitalists like Rockefeller and Morgan for their constructive role in abolishing cutthroat competition, thereby presumably hastening the rule of socialism. See *NYT*, Feb. 13, 1912, p. 20; *HC*, Dec. 10, 1913, p. 1 and Feb. 20, 1912, p. 1.

[27.](#) Henderson to editor, *HC*, Feb. 1, 1912, p. 1; Moderwell, *Socialism and Private Property* (Cambridge, Mass., 1912), pp. 2–8. Obviously modeled after the Fabian tracts, the Harvard Socialist tracts were to be issued periodically by the Harvard Socialist Club, but seemingly only two were ever published.

[28.](#) "Who Gets America's Wealth?" *IS* 4 (Dec.-Jan. 1915–16), unp. (Supplement.)

[29.](#) Gilbert Hirsch to editor, *CS*, Apr. 7, 1910, p. 5. Jay Lovestone, president of the CCNY chapter, expressed disdain for those Comrades "who continually yelp their R-r-r-revolutionary position"; such comrades, he felt, were "woefully ignorant of Socialist party history both at home and abroad." Jacob Liebstein [Jay Lovestone] to Meyer London, June 25, 1917, Meyer London Papers, Tamiment Library.

[30.](#) "The Discussion of Socialism," *Harvard Illustrated Magazine* 11 (Apr. 1910), 231–32; *BB*, Nov. 10, 1913, p. 1; *IS* 2 (Feb.-Mar. 1914), 25.

[31.](#) *Socialism and Private Property*, p. 1; Witte Diaries, Jan. 10, 1910, in Witte Papers, SHSW. In the thirties, Witte became known as the father of the Social Security Act.

[32.](#) *IS* 2 (Dec.-Jan. 1913–14), 3; "Report to Executive Committee, February 26, 1912," ROS-ISSP.

[33.](#) Letter to Laidler, August 3, 1916, JSP. Most members of the ISS probably agreed with George Bernard Shaw who, nearly thirty years earlier, had argued that there were at that time "no authoritative teachers of Socialism. The [Fabian] essayists make no claim to be more than communicative learners." See Shaw, ed., *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, p. 6.

## Chapter 4

1. Letter to Holbrook, Dec. 27, 1905, ISSP. In the thirties Miss Flynn became a leading member of the Communist party.
2. *BISS*, Apr. 1909, unp.; MEC, Apr. 2, 1909, Apr. 10, 1911, and Dec. 22, 1913, ISSP.
3. Report of Laidler to Second Annual ISS Convention, Dec. 29–30, 1910, ISSP.
4. *BISS*, Mar. 1909, unp.; Ghent to L. Crandall, Oct. 28, 1908, ISSP.
5. MEC, Apr. 15, 1912, ISSP.
6. Simons, “Socialism and the College Student,” pp. 381–82; *New York World*, June 23, 1912, editorial sec., p. 1; *NYT*, Dec. 30, 1910, p. 7.
7. *BISS*, Mar.-Apr. 1910 and Dec.-Jan. 1911–12, unp.
8. *Ibid.*, Dec.-Jan. 1910–11, unp.; *HC*, Jan. 13, 1914, p. 5; *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp. The ISS even published a lengthy list of suggested dissertation topics on socialism and social reform. See *IS* 4 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 26–29.
9. See Frances Burger to editor, *BB*, Oct. 20, 1909, p. 2; John Lee Brooks, “The Forum Idea,” *Wesleyan Literary Monthly* 21 (Feb. 1913), 209–12. Noting that interest in the club that year had been less than overwhelming, Brooks wondered about its staying power. “Is it true,” he asked, “that the American student is ‘utterly provincial?’” *Ibid.*
10. “Socialist Society,” *Clark College Monthly* 2 (Dec. 1912), 197–98; *Worcester Telegram*, Dec. 11, 1913, p. 37.
11. *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1910–11, p. 9. That chapters did not resent the tutelage of the national office was confirmed by the late Senator Paul H. Douglas, who served as president of the Columbia Socialist Club during 1914–15. Interview with Paul H. Douglas, Washington, D.C., Oct. 9, 1972.
12. Intercollegiate Socialist Society, *Study Course on Socialism* (New York, 1916), pp. 3–4.
13. “Notes on ISS,” LP; *YDN*, Nov. 28, 1914, p. 3.
14. *DC*, Nov. 10, 1908, p. 4, Nov. 30, 1908, p. 1, Jan. 9, 1909, p. 3, and Feb. 23, 1909, p. 1.
15. *BISS*, Nov.-Dec. 1912, p. 6; Minutes of the Barnard Student Council, Oct. 23, 1914, Barnard College Archives. Somewhat later, the student council sanctioned evening meetings of the club’s study groups at the homes of members, “nogentlemen attending.” *Ibid.*, Mar. 8, 1916.
16. *NYC*, Dec. 28, 1912, p. 6.
17. *TC*, Feb. 24, 1916, p. 2; *NYC*, Mar. 5, 1916, p. 7.
18. *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1910, p. 1. Stokes also sounded “radical”-and humorless—in an exchange with his brother, the Reverend Anson Phelps Stokes who was secretary to the Yale Corporation, concerning the Yale Society for the Study of Socialism. To overcome initial faculty opposition to an ISS chapter at Yale, the interested students convinced the faculty that the aim of the



chapter was not to make converts to socialism but merely to provide a forum for the open discussion of both favorable and unfavorable views on socialism; to further calm the fears of some faculty members, the students themselves named their chapter the Yale Society for the Study of Socialism, rather than Yale Socialist Club, the practice elsewhere. Unaware of those developments, Stokes thought that Anson had selected the name and blamed him for unfair discrimination against the ISS. Nobody, he wrote to Anson, demanded that the Yale Republican Club be renamed the “Yale Society for the *Study of* political republicanism,” or that the Yale Democratic Club be called the “Yale Society for the *Study of* political democracy.” Thus it was “no more ... reasonable,” he concluded, to saddle an ISS chapter with “a colorless and noncommittal designation...Anson assured his brother that he had not been consulted regarding the name of the chapter but had merely agreed to it after the fact. But since students came to college primarily to study, it seemed to him that the name selected by the students themselves was quite appropriate. As to his brother’s references to other political clubs, “the so-called Republican and Democratic Clubs at Yale are not societies for study at all. They merely occasionally get a speaker in connection with the campaigns. In fact, they only actually exist at campaign times.” *New York Sun*, Jan. 14, 1912, sec. 5, p. 9; J. G. Phelps Stokes to Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr., Feb. 17, 1911, JSP; Anson Phelps Stokes to J.G. Phelps Stokes, Feb. 20, 1911, [Anson Phelps] Stokes Letters, Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives. Anson Stokes’s observation regarding the Democratic and Republican clubs and their coming to life only at campaign times underscores the difference between them and the ISS chapters, which were active all year round, in season and out.

[19.](#) *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp.

[20.](#) *NYT*, Dec. 31, 1910, p. 2, *NYC*, Dec. 31, 1910, p. 3.

[21.](#) S. Lasky, “Scott Nearing at C.C.N.Y.,” *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 21–22. At the next ISS convention, Jay Lovestone, president of the CCNY chapter, exhibited several attractive posters prepared by chapter members. Such posters, he told the delegates, had been effective in attracting “fine crowds” to their meetings. *Ibid.*, 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 16.

[22.](#) “Public Lectures at Yale,” *ibid.*, 5 (Dec.-Jan. 1916–17), 15–16. The Yale chapter’s policy regarding speakers was set during the presidency of Alexander Trachtenberg and seems to have been adopted by his successors. In essence, Trachtenberg and his fellow members elected to reach Yale students through the most prominent speakers obtainable; insisted that the chapter present both advocates and opponents of socialism; and urged that “professional debaters” not be allowed to monopolize the discussion following each lecture. They also cautioned socialists among the leaders of other chapters to avoid the temptation of making converts on the ground that the ISS was not “a propaganda society,” but rather a society for the study of socialism. See *NYC*, Dec. 28, 1912, p. 6.

[23.](#) “Jottings from the I.S.S. Convention,” *IS* 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 16; “A Year of Growth,” *ibid.*, 6 (Oct.-Nov. 1917), 23; *ibid.*, 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 17.

[24.](#) *NYC*, Dec. 30, 1913, p. 3. The earnest study of the socialist movement and its philosophy was sufficient unto itself, Trachtenberg also declared, for such study was furthering the intellectual development of the chapter members and stimulating their sense of social responsibility. *IS* 2 (Feb.-Mar. 1914), 25.

[25.](#) *NYC*, Dec. 30, 1913, p. 3. At a subsequent convention, John Spargo reminded the delegates that it was the purpose of the ISS to promote the study of socialism, and he advised them once again to eschew propaganda. “Colleges are no place, nor student years the time for a



spirit of partisanship....” See “The Intercollegiate Socialist Society Convention,” *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 15.

[26.](#) *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1911–12; Bobbe, “Dabbling in Socialism,” *IS* 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 9–10; Smith, “Utopia and Ways to Reach It,” *ibid.*, 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 23–25; Douglas, “Anti-Socialistic Somnambulism,” *ibid.*, 3 (Oct.-Nov. 1914), 20–21.

[27.](#) “A Further Study of Socialism,” *ibid.*, 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 21–22.

[28.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 16. A few years after his graduation, Jay Lovestone was ready to apply what he had learned when he started on his short-lived career as a leader of the Communist party.

[29.](#) “Report to Seventh Annual Convention, December 1915,” ROS-ISSP.

[30.](#) Laidler’s Notes for Executive Committee Meeting of Jan. 20, 1911, ROS-ISSP and MEC, Jan. 20, 1911, ISSP. The timing of Laidler’s recommendation suggests that delegates to the ISS convention in December 1910 may have sounded him out on the question of student representation.

[31.](#) “Report of the Committee on Student Representation and Sectional Conferences (1912),” ISSP; MEC, Feb. 3, 1913, *ibid.*

[32.](#) “Referendum on Proposed Amendments to ISS Constitution [1913],” Helen Sumner Woodbury Papers, SHSW, hereafter Woodbury Papers; “Jottings from the ISS Convention,” *IS* 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 15; MEC, Dec. 18, 1916, Woodbury Papers.

[33.](#) Chapter continuity presented a perennial problem. In all too many instances, reported Laidler, all of the officers were seniors; when these were graduated, “the chapter dies....” To overcome this organizational deficiency, he advised chapters to elect one or two officers who were sophomores or juniors and who could carry on the work after the seniors had left. Second, the chapter could involve some “influential professor” who might assist in reorganizing the chapter in the fall, if necessary. Third, Laidler suggested that each chapter do its work through five committees: membership, program, literature, advertising, and press. The chief duty of the advertising committee, it appears, was to help obtain paid advertising for the *Intercollegiate Socialist*; that of the press committee, to secure “proper publicity” for chapter meetings and public lectures. See “Suggestions to I.S.S. Chapters (1913),” ISSP; “Report to Seventh Annual Convention, December 1915,” ROS-ISSP.

[34.](#) *NYC*, Dec. 28, 1915, p. 6.

[35.](#) Chapter Report Form for Seventh Annual Convention, Dec. 10, 1915, ISSP.

[36.](#) *Progressive Dentist* 1 (Jan. 1912), 4. Organizer Kirkpatrick considered this chapter one of the best in the ISS. He praised those practicing dentists who were supplementing the work of the chapter and who were “‘always at it’—pulling our teeth and putting in Socialism, forever talking about the movement and scattering Socialist literature.” See *BISS*, Mar.-Apr. 1910, unp.

[37.](#) “The Young Alumni and the I.S.S.,” *IS* 5 (Feb.-Mar. 1917), 20–21. Clark’s prescription for alumni chapters was in fact an embryonic program for the League for Industrial Democracy, successor to the ISS.

[38.](#) *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1911–12, unp.

[39.](#) *Intercollegiate Socialist Society*, 1909, unp. and Press Release, Oct. 1910, ROS-ISSP.

[40.](#) “Socialism and Modern Thought” [Study Course of the New York Chapter of the ISS, 1913–14], ISSP; Report of Director of Lecture Bureau to Chapter Members [1912], *ibid.*; *IS* 1

(Spring-Summer 1913), 18.

[41.](#) Letter to Laidler, Feb. 2, 1917, JSP.

[42.](#) Membership Records, ISSP; Report to Seventh Annual Convention, Dec. 1915, *ibid.*; *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 17.

[43.](#) “Confessions of a Harvard Man,” *The Forum* 51 (Jan. 1914), 76–77. “I think that the I.S.S. is one of the cleanest, highest-minded and [most] worth-while of the influences which can enter the students’ life while at college,” wrote Bruce Bliven, the future editor of the *New Republic* and then president of the Stanford chapter. See *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1911–12, p. 8.

[44.](#) *IS* 3 (Apr.-May 1915), 5; *ibid.*, 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 17; *ibid.*, 4 (Apr.-May 1916), 3. Completely captivated by Spargo, Professor Brooks of Swarthmore wrote to Laidler, “As a presentation of Socialism I have never heard anything more lucid and compelling than [his] lectures. What magnificent English he uses!” ROS-ISSP.

[45.](#) *BISS*, Feb.-Mar. 1911, p. 2.

[46.](#) *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 271–72.

[47.](#) Sinclair, OHC, p. 64; League for Industrial Democracy, *Twenty Years of Social Pioneering*, p. 10; “Special Contributions,” ISSP. Three members of the executive committee contributed a total of \$2,500 annually in each of three years. See “Appeal for Funds [1915]” *ibid.*

[48.](#) Referring to a gentleman who had contributed a total of \$250 that year, Miss Sanford informed her correspondent that “my heart is set upon his becoming one of our *big* contributors, say at least \$500 a year.” Letter to Rose Pastor Stokes, Mar. 10, 1915, Rose Pastor Stokes Collection, Tamiment Library; “Contributions Received in Response to Appeal,” June 3–18, 1912, ISSP.

[49.](#) NYC, Dec. 30, 1912, p. 2.

[50.](#) *The Reminiscences of John Spargo* (1950), pp. 150, 153–56, in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University, hereafter Spargo, OHC.

[51.](#) See MEC, Jan. 13, 1913-Apr. 8, 1914, ISSP. The Cooperative Press was “crying out” for the more than \$500 owed by the ISS, Mary Sanford informed Stokes at one point. She asked him if he could see a Mr. Brisbane “this week” and attempt to obtain “\$250.00 or \$500.00” from him. Letter to Stokes, Dec. 10, 1914, JSP. Earlier that year Stokes had turned down a fellow member of the executive committee who had solicited his assistance in behalf of Keir Hardie, the British socialist and labor leader, since Stokes was in a particularly difficult situation because of “the very serious embarrassment in which the I.S.S. finds itself....” Letter to Paul Kennaday, Apr. 16, 1914, *ibid.*

## Chapter 5

1. Sandburg to Holbrook, Dec. 6, 1905, ISSP. London's expectations of the ISS are quoted by Joan London, *Jack London and His Times*, p. 299.

2. W. J. Ghent to Robin E. Dunbar, Nov. 9, 1907, ISSP; *BISS*, Oct.-Nov. 1909, unp. Ironically, the year before, the ISS executive committee had rejected a suggestion from the *International Socialist Review* that the society publish a pamphlet on "Capitalist Control of Education" for distribution among college students and faculty. Such a pamphlet, the committee held, might antagonize "the very element" the ISS wanted to reach. See MEC, Dec. 18, 1908, ISSP.

3. MEC, Oct. 16 and Dec. 11, 1911, *ibid.*; "Report to Executive Committee, Mar. 25, 1912," ROS-ISSP; MEC, Jan. 13, 1913, ISSP.

4. *BISS*, Mar. 1909, unp. Throughout its history, the Wisconsin chapter maintained cordial relations with the Madison Socialist party local. In the midst of war, David Weiss, chairman of the chapter's executive committee, and Olaf Flood, its secretary, served on the campaign committee organized to assist in the primary campaign of the Socialist party's candidate for mayor of Madison. See *DC*, Mar. 13, 1918, p. 8.

5. MEC, Apr. 2, 1909, ISSP; *BISS*, Oct.-Nov. 1909, unp. At a subsequent ISS convention, Frank Bohn, who was identified with the "radical" wing of the Socialist party, advised the delegates to urge chapter members to join a local party branch as soon as they decided that they were socialists. See *NYC*, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 7. It should be pointed out, however, that Bohn expressed his own opinion, not ISS policy.

6. MEC, Jan. 8, 1912 and Jan. 12, 1914, ISSP.

7. "A Practical Suggestion," *IS* 4 (Dec.-Jan. 1915-16), 3-4. The following year, Irwin St. John Tucker, a well-known socialist, asked Stokes to issue credentials to him as a fraternal delegate from the ISS to the National Emergency Conference of the Socialist party. It would be impossible for him to comply, replied Stokes, "since it has always been the policy of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society to avoid participation as an organization in party affairs..." Letter to Tucker, Apr. 4, 1917, JSP.

8. *NYC*, Dec. 30, 1910, p. 3, Feb. 5, 1911, mag. sec., p. 13; *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1910-11, p. 7. Eugene Debs also recognized the potential usefulness of the ISS to the socialist movement... I am much interested in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society," he wrote to the ISS, "and ... I see in it great possibilities for special and effective propaganda in the interest of our movement..." *Ibid.*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp.

9. *NYT*, Oct. 23, 1910, mag. sec., p. 2; *BISS*, Dec.-Jan. 1910-11, p. 15.

10. *A Christian View of Socialism* (Girard, Kansas, 1917), p. 11, quoted by Robert T. Handy, "Christianity and Socialism in America, 1900-1920," *Church History* 21 (Mar. 1952), 48.

11. *The Christian Socialist*, Mar. 15, 1914, p. 5, quoted by Handy, "Christianity and Socialism in America, 1900-1920," p. 42; "The Appeal of Socialism to a Christian Mind," *IS* 5 (Dec.-Jan. 1916-17), 8-9. Although Rauschenbusch never joined the party because he was unable to

follow those Christian socialists who identified the future socialist state with the kingdom of God, his indictment of capitalism was not so different from that of the socialists:

“In all the operations of capitalistic industry and commerce, the aim that controls and directs is not the purpose to supply human needs, but to make a profit for those who direct industry. This in itself is an irrational and un-Christian adjustment of the social order, for it sets money up as the prime aim and human life as something secondary, or as a means to secure money.” See *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York, 1912), p. 312.

[12.](#) *IS* 4 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 13; Scudder, “Socialism and Sacrifice,” *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1910, pp. 842, 847. Miss Scudder’s *Socialism and Character* was an earnest but not altogether successful attempt to reconcile the teachings of socialism and Christianity.

[13.](#) “The Intercollegiate Socialist Society Convention,” *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 15. Though the Berkeley Divinity School was not among the more influential chapters, it was the only one in which the entire student body had joined the chapter. “Curiously enough,” stated Laidler, this distinction formerly belonged to Meadville Theological Seminary, where more than half of the students were chapter members. Laidler, one suspects, was unaware of the powerful attraction that socialism held for divinity students. See “Report to Seventh Annual Convention, Dec. 1915,” ROS-ISSP.

[14.](#) *BB*, Oct. 11, 1915, p. 5; *Wesleyan Argus*, Apr. 15, 1912, unp.

[15.](#) *The Present Status of Socialism in America* (New York, 1911), p. 246.

[16.](#) See David J. Saposs, *Left Wing Unionism: A Study of Radical Policies and Tactics* (New York, 1926), pp. 33–37; James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912–1925* (New York, 1967), pp. 33–36.

[17.](#) *NYT*, Dec. 29, 1911, p. 6, Dec. 30, 1911, p. 7, Oct. 14, 1912, p. 6.

[18.](#) *Ibid.*, Apr. 27, 1910, p. 8 and May 1, 1910, p. 20; *MEC*, Apr. 24, 1911, ISSP.

[19.](#) ISS Circular [1910], *ibid.*; *NYT*, Jan. 3, 1910, p. 1; *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp. The closed shop was the only acceptable alternative for working people, Miss Cole told the Barnard Socialist Club. “There is no such thing as an open shop; it is either closed to scabs or closed to the union.” *BB*, Mar. 2, 1910, p. 3.

[20.](#) Harvard Socialist Club, “What Harvard Teaches” [1911], Material on Harvard Student Organizations, Harvard University Archives. The goodies earned \$15 per month and had not had an increase in twenty-three years; during that period the cost of living had advanced “at least forty per cent.” See Stanton Coit Kelton, “Harvard’s ‘Goodies’ and the Living Wage,” *Harvard Monthly* 51 (Feb. 1911), 180. Kelton was a member of the Harvard Socialist Club.

[21.](#) *Boston Globe*, July 19, 1915 [Clipping], in Minutes of Harvard Socialist Club, Harvard University Archives; *Progressive Dentist* 1 (Feb. 1912), unp. Several months later, the journal announced that the Esch bill had passed both houses of Congress, thus insuring the health and safety of the more than four thousand workers in the match industry. *Ibid.*, 1 (June 1912), 17.

[22.](#) *MEC*, June 13, 1912, and Resolution of Executive Committee, 1912, ISSP. That year the withdrawal of the union label from the loyal printer of the ISS precipitated a minor crisis. Laidler reported that the firm’s appeal for reinstatement was before the Allied Printing Trades Council, and the committee then voted to continue to do business with the printer, pending

clarification of his status. Happily, the Council restored the printer's union label shortly thereafter. MEC, Mar. 11, 1912, *ibid.*

[23.](#) NYC, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 1; *IS* 1 (Feb.-Mar. 1913), 14.

[24.](#) *Ibid.* 5 (Oct.-Nov. 1916), 26. The Socialist party's Information Department stated in 1915 that "all Socialists believe in the industrial form of labor organization," but that they differed with the IWW on how to reach that goal. Quoted by Weinstein, *Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 37.

[25.](#) Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 95-96; Weinstein, *Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 22. For a revisionist interpretation of the IWW, denying that the Wobblies were syndicalists or that they rejected political action, see Joseph Robert Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too* (Westport, Conn., 1969).

[26.](#) Letter to Sherman, Nov. 18, 1905, Ghent Papers.

[27.](#) NYC, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 1; *IS* 5 (Oct.-Nov. 1916), 26. Frank Bohn, an ISS lecturer, was an early supporter of the IWW. By 1911 even he thought that IWW opposition to political action was destroying the union. See Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, p. 221.

[28.](#) "ISS: Notes," LP; "A Plea for the Strikers," *Harvard Monthly* 54 (Mar. 1912), 4-7. David Williams, a student at Harvard Law School, addressed the Lawrence strikers and contributed \$25 collected by the Harvard Socialist Club. *NYT*, Feb. 1, 1912, p. 3.

[29.](#) *BISS*, Feb.-Mar. 1912, p. 11.

[30.](#) *IS* 1 (Feb.-Mar. 1913), 18. The society thought it "highly amusing" that Sheriff Harburger, accompanied by two dozen deputy sheriffs, kept a close watch at the meeting. *Ibid.* Years later, Harry Laidler commented that few trade union members had come to the meeting even though Max Hayes had been billed as a featured speaker. "We had to depend largely upon the intellectuals, Charles Beard and various others came down...." Though the meeting was successful, "the average craft unionist was very suspicious." See *The Reminiscences of Harry W. Laidler, Socialist Movement Project* (1965), pp. 41-42, in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University.

[31.](#) "What Haywood Says on Political Action," *International Socialist Review* 13 (Feb. 1913), 623.

[32.](#) *IS* 2 (Feb.-Mar. 1914), 26; *TC*, Apr. 24, 1918, p. 1.

[33.](#) Scudder, "Woman and Socialism," *Yale Review*, n.s., 3 (Apr. 1914), 459; Weinstein, *Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 60.

[34.](#) "Attendance at Executive Committee Meetings of ISS," Woodbury Papers; NYC, Jan. 16, 1910, p. 1; *BISS*, Jan.-Feb. 1910, unp. Cooperation with the suffrage movement "wherever possible" seemingly did not extend to participation with floats in a planned parade. The ISS executive committee voted tersely to "take no action" on an invitation to join the march. MEC, Sept. 30, 1912, ISSP. At the fifth annual convention in 1913, Harriot Stanton Blatch, militant suffragist, discussed the progress made in achieving woman suffrage in the United States; Morris Hillquit described the role of the socialist movement in obtaining manhood suffrage in Europe; and W.E.B. Du Bois discussed Negro suffrage. *IS* 2 (Feb.-Mar. 1914), 26.

[35.](#) Kiichi Kaneko to "Dear Comrade," Jan. 9, 1909, ISSP; *BB*, Apr. 13, 1910, p. 2.

[36.](#) Barnard Socialist Club to editor, *ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1910, p. 3; *ibid.*, May 18, 1911, p. 1 and Poyntz to editor, *ibid.*, Nov. 2, 1915, p. 2.

[37.](#) Editorial, *ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1915, p. 2; *ibid.*, Nov. 23, 1915, p. 3. One of the aims of the merger, according to an officer of the Socialist club, was to bring together in one organization “the so-called conservatives and the so-called radicals....” Eleanor W. Parker to editor, *ibid.*, Nov. 29, 1915, p. 2. Laidler’s statement is in “Report to Seventh Annual Convention, December 1915,” ROS-ISSP.

[38.](#) *BB*, Dec. 6, 1915, p. 1; *CS*, Oct. 12, 1916, p. 5.

[39.](#) At one meeting, the chapter discussed the status of women based on a reading of August Bebel’s *Women Under Socialism*. Some members held that women could make substantial progress even under capitalism, while others maintained that only under socialism would women gain complete equality. *BB*, Dec. 13, 1917, p. 6.

[40.](#) Letter to Spargo, n.d. [copy], Rose Pastor Stokes Papers, Yale University Archives. The book referred to by Mrs. Strobell is not identified in her letter, and Spargo’s review did not appear in the *Intercollegiate Socialist*. Caro Lloyd Strobell was the sister of Henry Demarest Lloyd and wife of George H. Strobell, the Christian socialist who had assisted the ISS in its difficult early years. She resigned from the Socialist party in 1927 and in 1935 she joined the Communist party. In 1940 she became a part owner of the *Daily Worker*.

[41.](#) See Shannon, *Socialist Party of America*, pp. 50–52 and Weinstein, *Decline of Socialism in America*, pp. 66–67, 73.

[42.](#) See Shannon, *Socialist Party of America*, p. 53; Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1967), 1:298–301. In 1913 the ISS executive committee authorized the NAACP to copy the ISS mailing list. *MEC*, Nov. 25, 1913, ISSP.

[43.](#) *IS* 4 (Apr.-May 1916), 34. Howard, reported Laidler, has a “promising Chapter....” *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[44.](#) Second Draft of Autobiography, pp. 227–28, Rose Pastor Stokes Papers, Yale University. Morse was tremendously impressed by Mrs. Stokes and told the ISS that she was “a most excellent missionary.” As to her visit to Benedict College, it was his opinion that she “made an impression those students will not soon forget.” He made no mention of her organizing efforts at Benedict, possibly in the belief that the subject was closed. Though he had suggested to her that she visit Benedict in the first place, he obviously did not expect her to organize a chapter. Letter to Alice K. Boehme [ISS central office], Dec. 14, 1916, Rose Pastor Stokes Collection, Tamiment Library Institute, New York University.

[45.](#) Letter to Laidler, Jan. 25, 1917, JSP.

[46.](#) “The Problem of Problems,” *IS* 6 (Dec.-Jan. 1917–18), 5–9; Debs, “The Negro: His Present Status and Outlook,” *ibid.*, 6 (Apr.-May 1918), 11–14. In 1912 Du Bois had resigned from the Socialist party to support Wilson but had remained in the ISS. Du Bois, incidentally, supported America’s role in the war and told the CCNY chapter that America and her Allies were fighting abroad to defeat the false doctrine of racial superiority. He urged his young listeners to join this battle here at home and warned them to expect much opposition and bigotry. *TC*, Feb. 20, 1918, p. 1.

[47.](#) League for Industrial Democracy, *Twenty Years of Social Pioneering*, p. 34.



[48.](#) MEC, Sept. 23 and Oct. 21, 1910, ISSP; Stokes to McKenzie, Dec. 22, 1910, JSP.

[49.](#) Beard, "Why Study Socialism?" *IS* 1 (Spring-Summer 1913), 3; *Wesleyan Argus*, Dec. 14, 1911, p. 1; *YDN*, Dec. 9, 1911, p. 1 and "Notes and Gleanings," *NYT*, Jan. 21, 1912, p. 12; CS, Dec. 20, 1915, p. 7. Seligman, it appears, was not completely convinced after all that a thorough knowledge of economics would automatically insure an understanding of socialism. For upon Seligman's request, Graham Stokes sent him "a brief statement relative to the importance of the study of Socialism." Letter to Seligman, July 3, 1916, JSP.

[50.](#) "The I.S.S. from the Faculty Viewpoint," *BISS*, Oct.-Nov. 1912, pp. 9-10; Karapetoff to ISS, Apr. 15, 1912 and Bates to ISS, Apr. 17, 1912, quoted in *BISS*, Apr.-May 1912, pp. 3-4.

[51.](#) Letter to Kirkpatrick, Mar. 21, 1910, and letters to Laidler, Sept. 16 and Sept. 20, 1910, ISSP. Arner later co-authored with Spargo *Elements of Socialism*, a popular exposition of the subject recommended as a study text by the ISS.

[52.](#) Letter to Laidler, Mar. 2, 1914, Rose Pastor Stokes Papers, Yale University. Professor Jacques Loeb of the University of Chicago was also cautious in getting involved with the ISS. Loeb told executive committee member Ernest Poole that he would be willing to address the delegates at the forthcoming ISS convention, on condition that no reporter was present. MEC, Dec. 21, 1911, ISSP.

[53.](#) *NYC*, Dec. 29, 1912, p. 8. Socialists were "thick as blackberries" on the faculty of CCNY, where the ISS chapter elected a number of them to honorary membership. Among the honorary members were Professors Overstreet, Breithut, Hartmann, Woolston, Baskerville, and Cohen. *TC*, Apr. 1, 1914, p. 10, Jan. 7, 1916, p. 2, and Dec. 14, 1916, p. 1. Famed philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen, though not a socialist, was always accessible to students, regardless of their political or social views. Interview with Jay Lovestone, Offices of ILGWU, New York, New York, May 22, 1972.

[54.](#) Untitled MS, n.d. [1914?], ISSP.

[55.](#) *IS* 4 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 3-5; Douglas, "Professors and Free Speech," *ibid.*, 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 3-4.

[56.](#) "The Intercollegiate Socialist Society Convention," *ibid.*, 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 15.

[57.](#) *Ibid.* In a burst of enthusiasm, Algernon Lee, the director of the Rand School, told the delegates that the existence of his school was making it "impossible" for conservative boards of trustees to suppress radical teachings by firing a professor expressing unorthodox opinions. "Scott Nearing has been having the time of his life in addressing gatherings conducted by the Rand School, the I.S.S., the Socialist Party ... far larger than would have been possible had he been retained at the U. of P." *Ibid.*

[58.](#) *BB*, Oct. 10, 1918, p. 3; "Reconstruction after the War," *IS* 7 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), 24.

[59.](#) Husslein, "Socialism in the Schools," *America*, Dec. 17, 1910, p. 222; Editorial, *NYT*, Oct. 17, 1911, p. 10.

[60.](#) "Socialism in the Colleges," *The Century* 86 (July 1913), 468-70; "Socialism in the Colleges," *American Industries* 13 (Apr. 1913), 12.

[61.](#) *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 24, 1911, p. 10; Witte to editor, *DC*, Oct. 25, 1911, p. 3. Witte's letter seemingly was effective, for nothing further was heard about the matter. There is no



evidence that the Socialist club either planned to seize the student government or publish its own paper.

[62](#). Laidler's Notes for Meeting of Executive Committee on Jan. 20, 1911, in ROS-ISSP; *New York Sun*, Dec. 28, 1912, p. 5; *CS*, Dec. 6, 1913, p. 3.

[63](#). The Corporation's ruling is quoted in G. Peabody Gardner, Jr. [Secretary to Corporation] to Ernest L. Gundlach, May 25, 1912, Lowell Papers (folder 786), Harvard Archives. The interpretation of the ruling cited in the text was made by President Lowell who informed Walter Lippmann that the Corporation had acted not because of the activities of the ISS chapter, but because of those of the Suffrage League. See Lippmann to Lowell, Mar. 7, 1912, Lowell to Lippmann, Mar. 8, 1912, *ibid*.

[64](#). "Petition of Harvard Socialist Club [1911]," and Minutes of Harvard Corporation, Dec. 11, 1911, Harvard Archives; Henderson, "The College and the Radicals," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* 20 (Mar. 1912), 463.

## Chapter 6

- [1.](#) See James Joll, *The Second International, 1889–1914* (London, 1955), pp. 196–98.
- [2.](#) See Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War* (Cambridge, Mass. 1935), pp. 13–17, 41. For the impact of the war on the American Socialist party, see Norman Bindler, “American Socialism and the First World War” (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1970).
- [3.](#) “The European War and Socialism,” *IS* 3 (Oct.-Nov. 1914), 3–11.
- [4.](#) Scudder, “Some Signs of Hope,” *ibid.*, 3 (Apr.-May 1915), 6–8; Stokes to Helen L. Sumner, Sept. 22, 1914, Woodbury Papers; Hillquit, “Sixth Annual Convention I.S.S.,” *IS* 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 16; *ibid.*; Wellman, “Too Much Tolerance,” *ibid.*, pp. 8–9.
- [5.](#) Trachtenberg, “The I.S.S. and the War,” *ibid.*, 3 (Oct.-Nov. 1914), 19; Walling, ed., *The Socialists and the War* (New York, 1915); “Sixth Annual Convention I.S.S.,” *IS* 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 19–20. The account of the convention does not divulge the authorship of the majority and minority reports.
- [6.](#) “A Course in International Relations,” *ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
- [7.](#) Hillquit to Executive Committee, Jan. 5, 1915 and Stokes/Laidler to Hillquit, Jan. 6, 1915, ISSP; *IS* 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 23.
- [8.](#) Kennaday, “In Time of Peace, Stick to It,” *ibid.*, pp. 7–8; “Jottings from the Conference Notebook,” *ibid.*, 4 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 14–22.
- [9.](#) *Ibid.*, 4 (Dec.-Jan. 1915–16), 26; Hughan, “Preparedness: A Reply to Bernard Shaw,” *ibid.*, 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 4–6.
- [10.](#) Laidler, “The Intercollegiate Socialist Society Convention,” *ibid.*, p. 14; *BB*, Jan. 10, 1916, p. 4; *NYC*, Dec. 30, 1915, pp. 1–2; *HC*, Jan. 4, 1916, p. 3; *IS* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1916), 20.
- [11.](#) Trachtenberg, “Military Training and the Student,” *ibid.*, 4 (Apr.-May 1916), 14–16.
- [12.](#) *Ibid.* 3 (Feb.-Mar. 1915), 21; *BB*, Jan. 18, 1915, p. 4.
- [13.](#) *CS*, May 14, 1915, p. 1.
- [14.](#) *Boston Globe*, May 31, 1915, n.p. and July 19, 1915, n.p., clippings in Minutes of Harvard Socialist Club, Harvard Archives.
- [15.](#) *American Labor Year Book, 1916* (New York, 1916), p. 126; Curti, *Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636–1936* (New York, 1936), p. 237. “The mood of the Party,” writes Weinstein, “was clearly one of non-involvement, and with each debate the Socialists moved nearer to an unequivocal antiwar stand.” *Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 123.
- [16.](#) Letter to Butler, Nov. 15, 1914, Central Files (Socialist Study Club folder), Columbia University Archives.
- [17.](#) Butler to Douglas, Nov. 16, 1914, Douglas to Butler, Dec. 10, 1914, Fackenthal to Douglas, Dec. 12, 1914, *ibid.* More than a year later, the university’s alumni journal reported

that at the recent ISS convention two of the three sessions had been held in Earl Hall. It added that about six hundred “students of socialism” had attended the sessions. See *Columbia Alumni News* 7 (Jan. 14, 1916), 479.

[18.](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the College of the City of New York, Dec. 13, 1915, pp. 224–25.

[19.](#) Ibid., Apr. 26, 1916, pp. 75–76. Perhaps the board had also become alarmed by an incident the year before. In the spring of 1915, the CCNY chapter had invited the Reverend Bouck White to address the chapter. White had served a prison sentence for disturbing the peace of Calvary Baptist Church from which he had been ejected. One hour before the start of the meeting, the club had been informed by the faculty room committee that permission to hold the meeting had been withdrawn. See Alexander Brook to editor, *TC*, Apr. 4, 1915, p. 8; *NYC*, Mar. 5, 1916, p. 7.

[20.](#) *YDN*, Mar. 16, 1915, p. 1; *HC*, Mar. 19, 1915, p. 1; *NYT*, Mar. 29, 1915, p. 7. The student paper at CCNY noted with approval the formation of the league to combat “a dangerous militarist spirit” being promoted in institutions of higher learning. Editorial, *TC*, Apr. 14, 1915, p. 6.

[21.](#) Stokes to Karsten, Aug. 31, 1915, JSP; *IS* 4 (Oct.-Nov. 1915), 19.

[22.](#) Hillquit, “The War and International Socialism,” *Yale Review*, n.s., 5 (Oct. 1915), 45–47; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (New York, 1968), p. 265; for Marx’s manifesto to the German workers, see Walling, *The Socialists and the War*, p. 9. In his article in the *Yale Review*, Hillquit, the student of history, remarked sadly that “catastrophic historical events are stronger than theoretical solutions.”

[23.](#) Stokes to [Rev. Walter] Laidlaw, Aug. 18, 1916, JSP; Stokes, “Is Defensive War Justified?” *IS* 5 (Oct.-Nov. 1916), 6–9.

[24.](#) For the positions of Walling and Nasmyth see “The Conference Speakers,” *ibid.*, pp. 15–16; Hughs, “The Logic of Pacifism,” *ibid.*, pp. 10–14.

[25.](#) “The Sentimental Aspects of Preparedness,” *ibid.*, 5 (Dec.-Jan. 1916–17), 4–8.

[26.](#) Stokes to Russell, Mar. 10, 1917, JSP; “A Socialist Protest” (Mar. 24, 1917), and Poolè to Stokes, Mar. 31, 1917, *ibid.*

[27.](#) “St. Louis Manifesto of the Socialist Party,” in Albert Fried, ed., *Socialism in America: From the Shakers to the Third International* (Garden City, N.Y., 1970), pp. 521, 524; Spargo, *Americanism and Social Democracy* (New York, 1918), p. 287. Louis B. Boudin, lawyer and Marxist dialectician who could split hairs with the best of them, also issued a minority report. In essence Boudin repeated the arguments of the majority opposing American involvement in the war but, unlike the majority, he did not make any recommendations regarding the party’s future course of action. See Shannon, *Socialist Party of America*, p. 96.

[28.](#) *NYT*, July 10, 1917, p. 7, July 17, 1917, p. 9, and July 18, 1917, p. 4; Sinclair to Stokes, May 22, 1917, JSP. Rose Pastor Stokes later rejoined the SP for a brief period and then departed for the Communist party. Years later Sinclair reiterated he had broken with the party not because of “sentiment or patriotism,” but because of the practical need to prevent the Kaiser from conquering Europe. See Sinclair, *OHC*, p. 130. Jack London, first president of the ISS, resigned from the party a year before America entered the war. Writing from Honolulu on March 7, 1916, London declared the party lacked “fire and fight” and had ceased to stress the importance of the

class struggle in the liberation of the working class. "Jack London's Resignation from the Socialist Party," *Overland Monthly*, n.s., 69 (May 1917), 446.

[29.](#) Spargo, *Americanism and Social Democracy*, pp. 315, 323; *NYT*, June 2, 1917, p. 1. In a telegram to President Wilson, Spargo assured the chief executive that "from now on, spiritually I am clad in khaki. I am ready for any service which is demanded." See Spargo, OHC, pp. 241–42.

[30.](#) Laidler to "Dear Member," transmitting Resolution of Executive Committee adopted May 7, 1917, in Woodbury Papers.

[31.](#) Walling to editor, *New York Globe*, May 3, 1917, clipping in Walling Papers; letter to editor, *NYC*, May 24, 1917, p. 6; Laidler to editor, *ibid.*, May 26, 1917, p. 6.

[32.](#) Stokes, "Universal Service in Peace and War," *IS 6* (Dec.-Jan. 1917–18), 11–15; Thomas "Universal Service in Time of Peace," *ibid.*, pp. 15–18; "College Socialists Split on the War," *The Survey*, Sept. 29, 1917, p. 578.

[33.](#) "The Coming Year," *IS 6* (Oct.-Nov. 1917), 4.

[34.](#) Laidler, "Our Ninth Convention," *ibid.*, 6 (Feb.-Mar. 1918), 21; "College Notes," *ibid.*, 6 (Apr.-May 1918), 32; "College Notes," *ibid.*, 6 (Feb.-Mar. 1918), 31; *CS*, Jan. 18, 1918, p. 1.

[35.](#) *NYC*, Dec. 29, 1917, p. 4; "Secretary's Report to Executive Committee [1917]," ROS-ISSP.

[36.](#) *DC*, Oct. 23, 1917, p. 1. Before adopting the resolution, the chapter listened to a lecture by Professor William Westerman who argued that pacifists should support the war to help destroy Prussian militarism. For the suppression of the socialist press, see H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917–1918* (Madison, Wis., 1957), p. 47, and *NYT*, Oct. 4, 1917, p. 8. At the annual convention in December 1917 the ISS seemingly took no position on the action of the government, but Frank Bohn, a supporter of the war, denounced the action of Postmaster General Bureson as "idiotic." *Ibid.*, Dec. 28, 1917, p. 2.

[37.](#) *DC*, Dec. 1, 1917, p. 4; Edgar L. Wood to editor, *ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1917, p. 4; *ibid.*, Jan. 15, 1918, p. 7. In January 1917 the Wisconsin Forum, which was organized by students and several professors, including Horace M. Kallen, Max Otto, and Oscar James Campbell, invited Max Eastman to speak on socialism. President Van Hise suddenly withdrew permission to hold the meeting on campus, and it was, therefore, held in the auditorium of the Madison Woman's Club. Years later when Merle Curti was researching his *History of the University of Wisconsin*, he asked Campbell for information regarding the Eastman episode. Campbell replied that because of Wisconsin's large German population, the university's loyalty was suspect; thus much that took place in and around the university during that period was "a pathological effort to dispel this reputation of both the university and the State of Wisconsin." Letter to Curti, July 27, 1947 (Folder: Wisconsin Forum), Series 20/3/2/2–20, University of Wisconsin Archives, Madison.

[38.](#) *DC*, Oct. 12, 1918, p. 4 and Oct. 26, 1918, p. 4. Ross addressed the Social Science Club in December 1918. *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1918, p. 1.

[39.](#) David Weiss, "The Wisconsin Chapter in War Times," *IS 7* (Apr.-May 1919), 32–34. But the chapter was unable to hear outside speakers on campus. Even Laidler, who had enjoyed cordial relations with Professor Commons, was turned down by Commons when, in March 1918, Laidler requested permission to address Commons' economics class. Commons refused because Laidler had frankly acknowledged his continued membership in the Socialist party; to

Commons, this meant that Laidler supported the St. Louis Proclamation, which Commons regarded as “one of the greatest dangers to the country.” Commons to Laidler, Mar. 21, 1918, ISSP.

[40.](#) Laidler to Stokes, Nov. 19, 1917 and Stokes to ISS Executive Committee, Nov. 23, 1917, JSP. Laidler should have realized that Stokes would not take kindly to his recommendation. Shortly after the St. Louis Convention, Stokes informed Laidler that Hillquit’s public statements during the preceding week “have removed the last vestige of respect that I still held for him....” Letter to Laidler, May 11, 1917, *ibid.*

[41.](#) Walling to Stokes, Nov. 27, 1917, Montague to Stokes, Nov. 27, 1917, Kelley to Stokes, Nov. 24, 1917, *ibid.* In an earlier letter, Kelley informed Stokes that he [Kelley] and Laidler had called upon Hillquit to extend the invitation to address the convention. The convention committee had decided to invite Hillquit since Spargo would also speak at the convention. Nov. 19, 1917, *ibid.*

[42.](#) Letter to Montague, Nov. 30, 1917, letter to Kelley, Nov. 26, 1917, *ibid.*

[43.](#) Laidler to Stokes, Nov. 28, 1917, Stokes to Laidler, Nov. 30, 1917 and Dec. 7, 1917, *ibid.*

[44.](#) Laidler to Stokes, Apr. 9, 1918 and Apr. 19, 1918, *ibid.*; Spargo to Laidler, Apr. 18, 1918 and Laidler to Spargo, Apr. 19, 1918, ISSP. In his reply to Spargo, Laidler implied that Spargo was one of the very few members who insisted on imposing his views on the rest of the executive committee.

[45.](#) Stokes to Laidler, July 15, 1918, Laidler to Stokes, July 17, 1918, JSP; Stokes to Laidler, Aug. 16, 1918, ISSP. In his appeal to Stokes, Laidler remembered to cross out Stokes’s name on the ISS letterhead.

[46.](#) Thomas to Stokes, July 23, 1918, Stokes to Thomas, July 29, 1918, JSP.

[47.](#) Poole to Stokes, Aug. 19, 1918, Stokes to Spargo, Aug. 23, 1918, *ibid.*

[48.](#) Laidler to Sumner, Nov. 2, 1917, Woodbury Papers; “Notes on the Tenth Annual Convention, ” *IS* 7 (Feb.-Mar. 1919), 30; Laidler to Stokes, Dec. 26, 1918, JSP. Was Laidler reporting to Stokes from force of habit?

[49.](#) “The Secretary’s Middle Western Trip, ” *IS* 6 (Apr.-May 1918), 31.

## Chapter 7

1. "I.S.S. Opportunity," *IS* 7 (Dec.-Jan. 1918-19), 4, 33; Circular letter, Dec. 12, 1918, ISSP. (Mimeographed.)
2. ISS to "Dear Friend," Feb. 14, 1918, *ibid.*
3. "Secretary's Report to Executive Committee [May 1919]," ROS-ISSP; *NYT*, Jan. 28, 1919, p. 5.
4. *YDN*, Apr. 2, 1919, p. 4 and "College Notes," *IS* 7 (Feb.-Mar. 1919), 34; *CS*, Mar. 17, 1919, p. 2 and Oct. 19, 1920, p. 1; "College Notes," *IS* 7 (Apr.-May 1919), 54; "Secretary's Report to Executive Committee (1919)," ROS-ISSP; "College Trips," *IS* 7 (Apr.-May 1919), 53.
5. Minutes of Barnard Student Council, Oct. 2, Oct. 21, and Oct. 23, 1918, Barnard College Archives; *BB*, Dec. 6, 1918, p. 2. In the midst of its trouble, the club was addressed by Dean Gildersleeve who spoke on the role of women in postwar reconstruction. *Ibid.*, Nov. 27, 1918, p. 2.
6. *Ibid.*, Oct 17, 1919, p. 2, Oct. 31, 1919, pp. 1-2.
7. "Freedom of Discussion in American Colleges," *SR* 8 (Mar. 1920), 255.
8. ROS-ISSP.
9. "In the Colleges," *SR* 8 (Feb. 1920), 188-89; *ibid.*, 8 (Mar. 1920), 253; "College Notes," *ibid.*, 9 (June 1920), 47.
10. *NYC* Dec. 30, 1919, p. 2; "The I.S.S. Convention," *SR* 8 (Feb. 1920), 185-89; Spargo to Laidler, Feb. 27, 1919 (copy), JSP; Laidler to Rose Pastor Stokes, Oct. 9, 1920, Rose Pastor Stokes Collection, Tamiment Library Institute.
11. "College Notes," *SR* 9 (June 1920), 47.
12. *Decline of Socialism in America*, p. 179.
13. Laidler, "Our Ninth Convention," *IS* 6 (Feb.-Mar. 1918), 19-20; "Notes on the Tenth Annual Convention," *ibid.*, 7 (Feb.-Mar. 1919), 24-25, 28.
14. Laidler, "Problems of the Revolutionized Order," *SR* 8 (Dec. 1919), 57; *ibid.*, 8 (Jan. 1920), 97-98; Laidler, "Russia," *ibid.*, 9 (Aug. 1920), 100-103.
15. *Revolutionary Radicalism: Report of the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, filed April 24, 1920, in the Senate of the State of New York*, 4 vols. (Albany, 1920), 1:1119-20; Chun, *Making Socialists out of College Students* (Los Angeles, 1920), unp.
16. Henry Campbell Black, "Socialism in American Colleges," *Bulletin of the National Association for Constitutional Government* 1 (Dec. 1920), 1, 12, 22; *DC*, Apr. 21, 1920, p. 1; Jackson to Birge, Dec. 14, 1921, Birge Papers, University of Wisconsin Archives, Madison.
17. *NYT*, Apr. 10, 1921, sec. 7, p. 5 and sec. 2, p. 1.

[18.](#) *Delineator* 98 (June 1921), 4–5, 67.

[19.](#) *TC*, Mar. 31, 1920, p. 2. In the same issue the paper reported that in a lecture sponsored by the Social Problems Club, Fiorello H. La Guardia, then president of the New York Board of Aldermen, had addressed a capacity audience on what to do about rent profiteering in New York City and that he had been introduced by President Sidney Mezes. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[20.](#) “Secretary’s Report,” p. 4, ROS-ISSP; Editorial, *NYT*, Aug. 22, 1920, sec. 2, p. 2.

[21.](#) Laidler, “Notes from the Bellport Conference,” *IS* 6 (Dec.-Jan. 1917–1918), 24–25; “Reconstruction after the War.” *ibid.*, 7 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), 17–28; “Notes on the Tenth Annual Convention,” *ibid.*, 7 (Feb.-Mar. 1919), 25–28. The 1918 conference, incidentally, provided the setting for what could surely serve as a model for an encounter group of a later era. Some of the delegates participated in “a thrilling experience session” sharing “their relation to the Socialist movement and their main interests in life.” *Ibid.*, 7 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), 27.

[22.](#) “Intercollegiate Conference on Labor and Radical Movements Called by the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, Dec. 29–30, 1920,” ISSP; *NYC*, Dec. 31, 1920, p. 1.

[23.](#) “The Future of the Review,” *SR* 10 (Apr.-May 1921), 33–34; Laidler to Woodbury, June 18, 1921, Woodbury Papers.

[24.](#) Minutes of Executive Committee of the League for Industrial Democracy, Oct. 24, 1921, LID Papers, Tamiment Library Institute (microfilm); *Labor Age* 10 (Nov. 1921), iv; League for Industrial Democracy, *The League for Industrial Democracy* (New York, 1921), front cover.

[25.](#) League for Industrial Democracy, *Education for the New Order* (New York, 1923), p. 2.



# Epilogue

[1.](#) *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York, 1969), pp. viii, 346–47, 529.

[2.](#) Witte Diaries, Jan. 10, 1910, Witte Papers, SHSW; Leiserson, “Farewell to Buildings, ” *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 9 (June-July 1908), 345–46.

# **Appendix A:**

## **Constitution of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society**

### **Name**

This Society shall be known as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society.

### **Object**

The object of this Society shall be to promote an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women by the formation of Study Chapters in universities and colleges, and among alumni; by providing speakers, and placing books and periodicals on Socialism in college libraries and reading rooms; by holding public meetings, and by publishing or otherwise providing such literature as may be required.

### **Membership**

Regular membership shall be restricted to graduate, undergraduate and former students of colleges and educational institutions of similar

rank, and teachers in schools and colleges, admitted to the Society either by the Executive Committee or by vote of a Chapter, and those elected to honorary membership, as below.

Regular members shall be of five groups, viz.:

- A. Active members, paying \$2.00 yearly dues.
- B. Contributing members, paying \$5.00 yearly.
- C. Sustaining members, paying \$25.00 or more yearly dues.
- D. Student members in universities, colleges and educational institutions above the rank of high school, paying \$1.00 yearly dues.
- E. Honorary membership may be conferred by the Executive Committee upon non-collegiate persons who, in the estimation of the Committee, will be of special usefulness. Honorary members shall pay \$2.00 or more yearly dues.

Non-collegiate persons interested in the work of the Society may be elected to auxiliary membership by the Executive Committee or by any Chapter upon paying \$2.00 or more yearly dues, but shall have no voting privileges.

Dues-paying members of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society are entitled to receive the various publications issued by the Society. They may also secure reduced rates on books cited in the I.S.S. Book List. Regular members have the additional right to vote on all referenda and for all officers elected by the Society.

## **Chapters**

Chapters shall be organized upon petition in due form of at least five persons, subject to approval by the Executive Committee and shall be open to Socialists and non-Socialists. College Chapters shall contribute to the funds of the Society at least 25 cents per member each year. Alumni Chapters shall contribute to the funds of the Society one-half of

their membership dues, but not less than one dollar per member per year. Except otherwise provided herein each Chapter shall have and preserve autonomy.

## **Government**

The Executive Committee shall consist of 20 members to be elected by a yearly referendum vote, and one additional member to be elected by each Alumni Chapter.

The Officers shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall be elected by the Executive Committee from its own number to hold office for one year.

The Executive Committee shall administer the affairs of the Society, and shall hold office for one year. The Secretary shall, on or before January 15th of each year, send to all members requests for nominations for members of the Executive Committee, and shall receive such nominations at the office of the Society until and including February 10th. He shall send out appropriate ballots by March 1st, and receive same until and including March 28th. The newly elected officials shall take office April 1st of each year.

The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, drop any of its members who may be absent from three successive meetings of the committee without valid excuse. The committee shall also have power to fill vacancies among its own members. It shall call an annual convention at some time during the college year.

There shall also be a committee of 12 student representatives elected each year by the dues-paying members of the various college chapters. The students in each section of the country shall be privileged to vote for representatives from their section and from their section only. The election of such representatives shall be conducted in a manner similar to that of the Executive Committee. It shall be the duty of each representative to cooperate with the General Society to the best of his ability in furtherance of I.S.S. work in his portion of the country.

Any proposition or regulation initiated among the membership and signed by 25 members shall be acted upon by the Executive Committee within thirty days after its receipt.

Any rule, regulation or action of the Executive Committee shall be subject to referendum vote of the members when petition for this purpose, signed by 25 or more members, is presented to the Secretary.

This Constitution may be amended by referendum vote. A proposed amendment shall be submitted for referendum if approved by the Executive Committee or signed by 25 members.

# Appendix B:

## Selected ISS Student Leaders and Members

Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held	Occupation
Walter R. Agard Amherst; President	Professor of Classics, University of Wisconsin; President, American Classical League
James W. Alexander Princeton; President	Professor of Mathematics, Princeton University; member, Institute for Advanced Study
Devere Allen Oberlin; President	Associate Editor, <i>The Nation</i> ; Founder, Worldover Press
Harold DeForest Arnold Wesleyan University	Director of Research, Bell Telephone Laboratories
Thomas S. Behre Harvard; Secretary	Businessman; active in liberal movements
Walter Bergman University of Michigan	Director of Research, Detroit Public Schools

<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Otto S. Beyer University of Illinois; President	Labor arbitrator and consultant; Chairman, National Mediation Board
Carroll Binder Harvard; President	Editor, <i>Minneapolis Tribune</i>
George H. Bishop University of Michigan	Professor, Washington University
Julius Seelye Bixler Amherst; Secretary	President, Colby College
Bruce Bliven Stanford	Editor, <i>New Republic</i>
Randolph S. Bourne Columbia	Writer
Paul F. Brissenden University of California	Professor of Economics, Columbia
Heywood Broun Harvard	Columnist; Founder, American Newspaper Guild
Maurice S. Calman N.Y. School of Dentistry	Socialist Alderman, New York City; President, Harlem Dental Society
E. Ralph Cheyney University of Pennsylvania; President	Poet



<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
R. W. Chubb Harvard; President	Attorney; Special Counsel, Reconstruction Finance Corporation
Evans Clark Amherst; President	Executive Director, Twentieth Century Fund; Editorial Board <i>New York Times</i>
Babette Deutsch Barnard	Poet
Paul H. Douglas Columbia; President	Economist; U.S. Senator
Robert W. Dunn Yale; President	Executive Secretary, Labor Research Association; Executive Committee, American Civil Liberties Union
Ethan E. Edloff University of Michigan	Educator
Gustav Egloff Cornell; President	Internationally known chemist, specializing in the field of petroleum and hydrocarbon chemistry
Samuel A. Eliot, Jr. Harvard; Secretary	Professor of English, Smith College
Boris Emmet University of Wisconsin	Labor statistician
Abraham Epstein	Founder and former Secretary, American Association for Social Security

<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
University of Pittsburgh; President	
Harold U. Faulkner	Professor of History, Smith College; Economic and Social Historian
Wesleyan University	
William M. Feigenbaum	Journalist
Columbia; President	
Herbert Feis	Historian
Harvard	
Osmond K. Fraenkel	Attorney; General Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union
Columbia; President	
Samuel H. Friedman	President, Community and Social Agency Employees Union; Socialist leader
CCNY	
John Temple Graves II	Author, Columnist, Lecturer
Princeton; President	
Gerard C. Henderson	Attorney; General Counsel, War Finance Board
Harvard; President	
James Henle	President, Vanguard Press
Columbia; Vice President	
René E. Hoguet	Businessman
Harvard	
Arthur N. Holcombe	Professor of Government, Harvard; President, American Political Science Association
Harvard	

Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held	Occupation
Eugenia Ingerman Barnard; Secretary	Physician
Alfred Jaretzki, Jr. Harvard; President	Attorney; Partner, Sullivan & Cromwell
Nicholas Kelley Harvard	Vice President and General Counsel, Chrysler Corporation; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury
Freda Kirchwey Barnard; President	Publisher, <i>The Nation</i>
William Klare University of Michigan	Vice President, Statler Corporation
William Sargent Ladd Amherst	Dean, Cornell Medical School
Harry W. Laidler Wesleyan University; President	Officer of ISS and LID, 1905–65; Author, Lecturer
William M. Leiserson University of Wisconsin; President	Economist; Chairman, National Mediation Board
John F. Lewis, Jr. University of Pennsylvania	Attorney; Civic reformer
Walter Lippmann Harvard; President	Author; Columnist
Roger S. Loomis	Professor of English Literature, Columbia

<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
University of Illinois	
Jay Lovestone CCNY; President	Director, International Relations; ILGWU
Isador Lubin Clark and University of Missouri; President	Industrial Commissioner, State of New York
Kenneth Macgowan Harvard; President	Professor of Theater Arts, UCLA; Drama Critic; Movie Producer
Charles A. Madison University of Michigan; President	Publisher; Author
Anita Marburg Vassar	Educator
Daniel Mebane University of Indiana; President	Treasurer and Publisher, <i>New Republic</i>
Inez Milholland Vassar; President	Attorney; Suffragette
Spencer Miller, Jr. Amherst	Secretary, Workers Education Bureau; Assistant Secretary of Labor
Broadus Mitchell Johns Hopkins	Professor of Economics, Johns Hopkins
Hiram K. Moderwell Harvard; President	Foreign Correspondent; Drama Critic
Margaret J. Naumberg	Educator

<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Barnard; President	
Leland Olds Amherst	Chairman, Federal Power Commission
Selig Perlman University of Wisconsin	Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin; Author
Carl Raushenbush Amherst	Labor Economist
H. S. Raushenbush Amherst	Author, researcher, Public Affairs Institute
Paul Raushenbush Amherst	Economist
David J. Saposs University of Wisconsin; President	Labor Economist; Author
Laurence Seelye Amherst	President, St. Lawrence University
Albert Lee Smallheiser Columbia; Secretary	Social Science Teacher; active in New York Teachers Guild
Tucker Smith New York University	Economist
Boris Stern University of Wisconsin	Staff, U.S. Department of Labor

<b>Name, College Attended, and Chapter Office Held</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Ordway Tead Amherst; President	Teacher; Publisher; Author; Chairman, Board of Higher Education, New York City
Alexander Trachtenberg Yale; President	Publisher, International Publishers
Seiman A. Waksman Rutgers; Secretary	Co-discoverer of Streptomycin; Nobel laureate
Ray B. Westerfeld Yale; Secretary	Economist; Banker; Professor of Economics, Yale
Edwin E. Witte University of Wisconsin	Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin; Author of Social Security Act
Theresa Wolfson Adelphi; President	Professor of Economics, Brooklyn College; Author
Gertrude Folks Zimand Vassar; President	Secretary, National Child Labor Committee

Sources: Mina Weisenberg, *The L.I.D.: Fifty Years of Democratic Education, 1905–1955* (New York: The League, 1955), pp. 26–30 and compiled by author from various sources.

# **Appendix C:**

## **Officers and Members of ISS**

### **Executive Committee, 1905–1921**

James W. Alexander, 1920–22; Treas. 1920–22  
Jessie Ashley, 1912–13; 1917–18  
Emily G. Balch, 1919–20  
Roger Baldwin, 1920–23  
Louis B. Boudin, 1917–23  
Robert W. Bruere, 1908–10  
Elizabeth B. Butler, 1907–8  
Evans Clark, 1916–25; V. Pres. 1918–23  
George Willis Cooke, 1905–8  
Jessica G. Cosgrave, 1911–13; V. Pres. 1911–12  
H.W.L. Dana, 1918–25; V. Pres. 1919–21  
Albert DeSilver, 1919–24; Treas. 1919–20  
Frank C. Doan, 1912–14  
Paul H. Douglas, 1915–16  
W.E.B. Du Bois, 1917–18  
Robert W. Dunn, 1919–23  
Elizabeth Dutcher, 1907–10  
Louise Adams Floyd, 1919–25  
Walter Fuller, 1920–22  
Lewis Gannett, 1920–24  
W. J. Ghent, 1907–10; Sec. 1907–10  
Arthur Gleason, 1918–23; Pres. 1920–21; V. Pres. 1921–23



Ellen Hayes, 1916–17  
Morris Hillquit, 1905–15; Treas. 1908–15  
René E. Hoguet, 1910–12  
Jessie Wallace Hughan, 1907–25; V. Pres. 1920–21  
Robert Hunter, 1905–11  
Ellis O. Jones, 1906–7; 1909–10; 1911–14; Sec. 1906–7  
Horace M. Kallen, 1919–20  
Edmond Kelky, 1908–10  
Florence Kelley, 1911–23; Pres. 1918–20; V. Pres. 1912–18; 1921–23  
Nicholas Kelley, 1912–20; 1921–25  
W. H. Kelley, 1907–8  
Paul Kennaday, 1907–8, 1910–11; 1912–24; Treas. 1907–8  
Freda Kirchwey, 1917–20  
William P. Ladd, 1919–20  
Harry W. Laidler, 1905–25; V. Pres. 1907–10; Org. Sec. 1910–17; Sec. 1917–25  
Winthrop D. Lane, 1918–21  
Algernon Lee, 1910–16; Sec. 1910–11  
Louis Levine, 1920–21  
Walter Lippmann, 1911–12  
Jack London, 1905–7; Pres. 1905–7  
Owen R. Lovejoy, 1905–6; Treas. 1905–6  
Darwin J. Meserole, 1918–21  
Katherine M. Meserole, 1905–9  
William P. Montague, 1917–18; 1920–23  
George Nasmyth, 1918–20  
Mary W. Ovington, 1914–15  
Elsie Cole Phillips, 1910–11; V. Pres. 1910–11  
Ernest Poole, 1908–18; V. Pres. 1912–18  
Juliet Stuart Poyntz, 1914–17  
M. G. Batchelder Rambaut, 1913–15  
Ida Rauh, 1910–11  
I. M. Rubinow, 1913–17  
Mary R. Sanford, 1907–25; Treas. 1916–19  
Leroy Scott, 1907–17; Sec. 1910–17

Vida D. Scudder, 1912–16; V. Pres. 1918–21  
H. D. Sedgwick, 1912–17  
Upton Sinclair, 1905–17; V. Pres. 1905–12  
Jessica Smith, Exec. Sec. 1919–23  
John Spargo, 1916–19  
Helen Phelps Stokes, 1907–25  
J. G. Phelps Stokes, 1905–18; V. Pres. 1905–7; Pres. 1907–18  
Caro Lloyd Stobell, 1913–21  
George Stobell, 1905–9  
Norman M. Thomas, 1918–25  
Alexander Trachtenberg, 1919–22  
William English Walling, 1912–18  
Bouck White, 1912–15  
Helen Sumner Woodbury, 1917–18  
Charles Zueblin, 1916–21

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*Source:* LID, *Twenty Years of Social Pioneering*, 1925.

*Note:* Service beyond 1921 denotes membership on the Executive Committee of the LID.

# Appendix D:

## ISS College Chapters Active for Varying Periods, 1910–1917

Adelphi	Hamilton
Alberta (Canada)	Hamline (Minn.)
Albion College (Mich.)	Harvard
American International	Hiram (Ohio)
American School of Osteopathy	Howard
Amherst	Iowa State College
Baker (Kansas)	John Marshall Law
Barnard	Johns Hopkins
Bates	Kansas State Agricultural
Beloit	LaCrosse (Wis.) Normal
Berkeley Divinity (Mass.)	Los Angeles Osteopathic
Bowdoin	Marietta College (Ohio)
Brooklyn Law	Massachusetts Agricultural
Brown	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Carnegie Institute of Technology	
CCNY	Meadville Theological Seminary (Pa.)
Clark	

Colgate	Miami University (Ohio)
Columbia	Middle Tennessee Normal
Connecticut Agricultural	Morningside College (Iowa)
Cooper Union	New York Dental College
Cornell	New York Law
Dartmouth	New York University
Denison	North Dakota Agricultural
DePauw	Northwestern
East Tennessee Normal	Oberlin
Emory and Henry	Ohio State
George Washington (D.C.)	Ohio Wesleyan
Grinnell	Oregon Agricultural
Pennsylvania State	University of Iowa
Princeton	University of Kansas
Purdue	University of Michigan
Radcliffe	University of Minnesota
Randolph-Macon	University of Missouri
Reed	University of Montana
Richmond	University of Nevada
Rutgers	University of North Dakota
Simmons	University of Oklahoma
Simpson (Iowa)	University of Pennsylvania
Southern California Law	University of Pittsburgh
Springfield YMCA	University of Rochester
Stanford	University of South Carolina
Swarthmore	University of Utah
Syracuse	University of Virginia
Temple	University of Washington
Trinity (Conn.)	University of Wisconsin

Union	Utah Agricultural
Union Theological Seminary	Valparaiso (Ind.)
University of California, Berkeley	Vassar
University of Chicago	Washington and Jefferson
University of Cincinnati	Washington University (Mo.)
University of Colorado	Wesleyan University (Conn.)
University of Florida	Western Reserve
University of Illinois	Williams
University of Indiana	Yale
<i>Source: ISS Papers.</i>	

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## **Archives and Manuscript Collections**

The most important single source of information on the Intercollegiate Socialist Society is the collection known as the ISS Papers at the Tamiment Library Institute of New York University. Though incomplete, the papers include official ISS correspondence; minutes of the ISS executive committee for the period 1905–1914; reports of the organizing secretary; annual reports and financial statements; course outlines for the study of socialism; and a variety of typed and mimeographed office materials. Unfortunately, the minutes of the executive committee for the years 1915 to 1921 appear to have been lost or destroyed. The Laidler Papers, also at the Tamiment Library, contain a few items of interest, but they proved less useful than one had hoped. Included in this collection is Laidler's uncompleted history of the ISS, which is largely descriptive rather than analytical.

Of great importance to the study were the papers of J. G. Phelps Stokes in the Special Collections of Columbia University. Stokes served on the ISS executive committee from 1905 to 1918 and as the society's president for more than ten years. Several documents in the collection and, particularly, Stokes's correspondence with ISS officials and others clarify his leading role and contribute to an understanding of the tensions between prowar and antiwar forces during the first World War. No other collection examined by the writer rivals in either extent or importance the ISS Papers or the Stokes Papers. The Helen Sumner Woodbury Papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin are useful because Mrs. Woodbury had the foresight to save some of the minutes

of the ISS executive committee for the period 1916 to 1917. As noted earlier, these are missing from the ISS Papers. Though William English Walling was influential in the ISS, his papers, also in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, are of marginal value for a study of the ISS. The Socialist Party of America Papers at Duke University are useful in a negative sense, for the absence of references to the ISS in this voluminous collection of official party documents offers convincing proof that no organizational ties existed between the party and the ISS. Several other collections deserve brief mention because each contributed in a small way to an understanding of the ISS. These are the Rose Pastor Stokes Papers and the Anson Phelps Stokes Papers at Yale University; the Rose Pastor Stokes Collection at the Tamiment Library; the A. Lawrence Lowell Papers at Harvard University; and the W. J. Ghent Papers in the Library of Congress.

The following collections yielded valuable information on the activities of individual ISS chapters. The Archives of Harvard University contain the minutes of the Harvard Socialist Club for the years 1908 to 1915 and several other important documents in a collection of material on Harvard student organizations. Together, they illuminate the role of perhaps the most influential chapter in the ISS. Several documents in the Barnard College Archives, particularly in the departmental correspondence for the years 1908–1909 and 1915–1916, and the student council minutes of October 1918, were helpful with regard to the Barnard Socialist Club. Walter Lippmann's personal correspondence for the years 1910 to 1914 in the Lippmann Papers at Yale University attests to Lippmann's key role during the early years of the Harvard Socialist Club, and to his continuing influence upon the club after his graduation in 1910. In the Columbia University Archives there is correspondence between Paul H. Douglas and President Nicholas Murray Butler which illustrates the problems facing ISS chapters, especially after the start of World War I. Finally, there is some material on the Wisconsin Socialist Club in the Edwin E. Witte Papers at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and in the Charles Van Hise and Edward E. Birge Papers in the University of Wisconsin Archives. It should be pointed out, however, that archival documents, though often enlightening, are insufficient by themselves if one wishes to reconstruct



the history of a particular chapter. More helpful in this regard were accounts in such ISS publications as the *ISS Bulletin* and the *Intercollegiate Socialist*. But another source of information on chapter activities—accounts in student newspapers and journals—proved indispensable.

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